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A HISTORY  
OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST  
IN GREAT BRITAIN

PERMISSV SVPERIORVM



# THE MASS OF SAINT GREGORY *the* GREAT



FROM THE ENGRAVING ON WOOD  
BY ALBERT DÜRER

SEE PAGE XIX



A HISTORY OF THE  
HOLY EUCHARIST  
IN GREAT BRITAIN

*BY T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.*

*With Notes by H. THURSTON, S.J.*

BURNS & OATES  
ORCHARD STREET  
LONDON

B. HERDER  
17 SOUTH BROADWAY  
ST LOUIS, MO.

· MCMVIII





# THE EDITORIAL NOTE

**A**LTHOUGH Father Bridgett's singularly wise and eloquent preface deserves to be studied by every reader of this book and would render any other attempted introduction out of place, it seems worth while to say a few words to explain the genesis of the present reprint and to account for certain modifications which have been made in its arrangement. When the idea first presented itself of commemorating the meeting of the Eucharistic Congress in London by reprinting the most important historical work on the Blessed Sacrament which has so far appeared on English soil, a certain difficulty was felt on the ground of its bulk and of the prolix treatment of various controversies now no longer of great interest. It was pointed out, however, that in the *Life of Father Bridgett*, by his old and valued friend, Father Cyril Ryder, a passage occurred which, while speaking most appreciatively of the treasures which the original edition of 1881 contains, makes frank avowal of its discursiveness and declares that "to become popular the book must be recast."

Acting upon this suggestion and with the generous co-operation of Father Bridgett's religious brethren, a process of rearrangement and curtailment has been undertaken which, it is hoped, will add to the popularity of the work, without in any substantial degree impairing its usefulness to students. For this rearrangement, which has been both judiciously and sympathetically carried out by other hands, the present writer can claim no credit. His own task has been to try to supplement here and there the information provided by the author, for it will be readily understood that during the interval of nearly thirty years which has elapsed since the book was first sent to press, many new sources of information have become available. To verify the citations from the many hundred volumes consulted by Father Bridgett in the preparation of this, as he considered, his most important work, would have been well-nigh impossible. Neither did it seem worth while to modify the references in the notes in order to adapt them to more recent editions of frequently quoted works, such as Rock's *Church of our Fathers* or the *Rites of Durham*. Still a certain process of revision has been gone through and some slight misprints and errors have been tacitly corrected, while more modern sources of information have been indicated in square brackets. Occasionally also it seemed desirable to point out the reasons for hesitating to accept the author's conclusions on doubtful points, but it is hoped that this has always been done with due respect for Father Bridgett's very high authority and in the conviction that he himself would have been the first to wish that any adverse evidence should not be ignored. Further, it may be pointed out that the author's text has always been scrupulously respected and that, apart from an occasional connecting phrase of no importance, any interpolations in the text or notes have been uniformly placed within square brackets. The revision and completion of the Index has been carried out by Mr Louis G. Howard, who is also largely responsible for the rearrangement of the text of the volume. A few engravings of objects of Eucharistic interest have also been added. A list of these will be found inserted after the table of contents.

## THE EDITORIAL NOTE

Finally, the present writer feels that he cannot terminate this brief Note without expressing his sense of the deep indebtedness which he, in company with countless other English-speaking Catholics, owes to the writings of the late Father Bridgett, and his conviction that no work could have been chosen which, from its singular combination of earnest piety and wide historical knowledge, was better fitted to represent the contribution of Great Britain and Ireland to the Eucharistic literature of the world.

HERBERT THURSTON, S.J.

31 Farm Street, London, W

August 21, 1908



# THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

**H**OW wonderful has been the history of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain! For more than a thousand years the races that successively peopled the island regarded the celebration of this sacrament as the central rite of their religion, the principal means of divine worship, the principal channel of divine grace. The Holy Eucharist was the great mystery of faith,\* the object not only of fear and of love, but also of supreme adoration. Then a change came, and now for more than three hundred years this view of our LORD's institution has been rejected with an energy and perseverance which no language can exaggerate. Altars of sacrifice were broken in pieces or condemned to the vilest uses. The doctrine of Masses was called "a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit," the worship of our LORD beneath the sacramental veils "idolatry." The offering of Mass by Catholic priests was punished with cruel death, the repudiation of it was required as the price of social preferment or of civil liberty. In the belief in the Holy Eucharist a test was found to distinguish between the professors of two opposite religions. Even to this day a solemn abjuration of the ancient Catholic doctrine is required when the crown is placed on the head of the most exalted ruler of the nation.

It is evident then that, whichever of these views is embraced, a history of this rite, even a partial history, professedly restricted to one country, ought to be full of interest and instruction. If the Protestant view be correct, then it will be a history of idolatry in worship and consequent corruption in morals. If, on the other hand, the Catholic view be the true one, it will be the history of God's fidelity to His promises, His watchful providence over His Church, His gracious dealings with men, and we shall have many a fair page to unroll of the mutual love of the Creator and of His creatures, though those pages may be defaced with some foul blots of man's ingratitude.

It is such a history, from the Catholic point of view, that I have attempted in the present work, and the purpose of this Introduction is to explain the principles which have presided over its composition.

When the Protestant views of the Eucharist were put forth in writing in the sixteenth century, they led to many learned answers in which texts of Scripture and the sayings of the Fathers are discussed with necessary yet wearisome minuteness and reiteration. With such discussions I am not concerned, and they will have no place in my work. Both sides in the great controversy have now grown somewhat weary of fighting about questions of grammar and rules of interpretation. Men have begun to turn their eyes to history, and to seek in it a commentary written by the hand of God on His own revelation. I am far from saying that that commentary does not itself admit of more than one reading, nor am I commending historical to the exclusion of scriptural or patristic studies: I merely say that to study a doctrine in its results is a favourite method in modern times, and I will not conceal that it is one full of interest and delight to myself. The writers of the sixteenth century to whom I am referring, occasionally, though seldom, make use of this argument drawn from history. I think I may truly say that the charges made against the ancient faith were so new, so startling, so vast, that at first Catholics could scarcely grasp all their meaning, or know on which side to turn for the best answer. It was as if the existence of

\* *Mysterium fidei*, words used in the very act of consecration.

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

the sun in the heavens were called in question, and they knew not whether to appeal to the testimony of the senses of living men, or to the effects of light and heat on agriculture, or to the records of science or of history. The doctrine of the Church on the Holy Eucharist untrue! Why, it was the doctrine of the Scriptures, the doctrine of the Fathers, the doctrine of all ages! If it were untrue, then all ages had been monstrously deceived, and the Christian Church had failed. At first an effort was made by the innovators to disguise this tremendous consequence. The Church had merely suffered a Babylonish captivity to the Bishop of Rome. This was Luther's first contention; but by degrees men grew bolder, and the theologians of Queen Elizabeth, in the crudest language they could find, condemned the Church of their forefathers as apostate and idolatrous.

The enunciation of such propositions almost took away the breath of Catholics, accustomed as they had been to look on the Holy Catholic Church as the temple of the Holy Ghost, the tabernacle of God with men, the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, adorned as a bride for her husband. St Thomas of Villanova, a contemporary of Luther's and a friar of the same Augustinian order, gave eloquent utterance to the amazement and horror which seized on him: "Good God," he says,\* "if those who forsook all the riches and pleasures of the world, to live in the greatest purity and simplicity, like angels in human form, living for Thee alone, for Thy honour, for Thy service, and intent on Thy praises day and night, seeking nothing but Thee, hurting no man, doing good to all, humble, modest and pious; if such as these were deceived and lived in error and, as thinking evil of God, perfidious and sacrilegious have been condemned—who then have been saved? O God, if Thou hast despised these and forsaken them and suffered them to err—these who, beyond the limits of human strength, have lived in holiness and purity in worship and devotion to Thee—whom then dost Thou love? whom in the world dost Thou enlighten? If these have despised Thy divine Majesty, who then have found favour with Thee? For certainly none such as these in all virtue and sanctity has the world ever possessed or seen. Away, away with such a thought about God as that He should suffer to err such worshippers, such most holy lovers of His goodness; or that He should condemn to eternal death those whom only His own grace could have raised to such a height of purity and sanctity."

More than a hundred years before these words were written the author of *The Imitation of Christ* had pointed to the ancient faith and devotion of the Church's saints as a confirmation of the truth of their belief in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar: "Oh! how true and burning was their faith, and what a solid argument is it of the truth of Thy sacred Presence!"† So too, our own great champion and martyr, Cardinal Fisher, in his controversy with Æcolampadius brings forward as a corroborative proof of the Real Presence its wonderful effects in the lives of the saints.‡ After enumerating these, he adds: "If anyone should attentively consider the progress and the decline, and the reformations of life which have often occurred in the Church, he will find that neglect or abuse of this sacrament has been the cause of decline; and, on the other hand, that faithful worship and devout frequentation of this sacrament have wonderfully contributed to progress and reform." He goes on to show this from history, recalling how the first Christians, as the Acts

\* Concio II, in *Dom. SS. Trin.* vol. 1, p. 701. Ed. 1850. argumentum sacræ præsentiae tuæ" (lib. iv, cap. xiv).

† *De Veritate Corp. et Sang. CHRISTI*, lib. iii. Pro-

‡ "O vera ardens fides eorum: probabile existens æm.



## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

of the Apostles relate, added prayer and frequent communion to their hearing of the word of God—how all the constancy of the martyrs came from their being inebriated with the Blood of CHRIST in holy communion—how, when persecutions and heresies ceased, the greater number of Christians fell into luxury and vice—and how the two great patriarchs of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, who revived piety and virtue, were especially devout to the Blessed Sacrament. “And if it be objected that in these very orders there are abuses, I cannot deny it,” he replies, “though there are also many pious and holy men. But this confirms my argument. For I am thoroughly convinced that in those communities where, in addition to holy reading and devout prayer, they are accustomed purely and sincerely to celebrate the divine mysteries, there great fruits of piety and religion daily grow; but whenever the divine mysteries are neglected or undevoutly performed, no hope of any good need be entertained.”

How were these arguments met by the innovators? They were never met. As the Jews railed against our blessed LORD without heeding His appeals to His life and works, so these men railed against the Church without heeding her appeal. If there was any attempt at a reply, it was such as the following. When Catholics quoted our LORD's promises to His Church, the Protestant Reformers replied by quoting prophecies of rebellion, apostasy, and antichrist. If Catholics pointed to the Church's saints, Protestants derisively pointed to sinners. But there was no endeavour to weigh the matter calmly, and to trace effects to causes, and to distribute impartially praise and blame. And this is why I have said that the history of the Church, or God's commentary on His own revelation, admits of more than one reading. I do not, of course, mean that there is more than one true interpretation of facts, or that the true interpretation is hard to find. I mean that there are two elements in the Church, the human and the divine, and the human element sometimes submits itself to the divine action and glorifies it, while at other times it resists the operation of God, perverts or profanes His institutions, and, by uniting a high profession with unworthy practice, “causes the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles.” “Among the Gentiles,” says Holy Scripture—that is, among the ignorant and prejudiced, who are unable or who refuse to see things as they are, and to assign effects to their true causes. By these “the way of truth is evil spoken of,” being blamed for that which it condemns.

There are two figures under which the Divine Teacher has opened to us this mystery of good and evil. He has said that “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit;” and he has told us that in the field of His Church weeds shall be found mixed with the wheat. Those who speak evil of the way of truth misapply these tests. They see the weeds with which the enemy has oversown the corn, and they attribute them to the evil nature of the field, or to the hand of Him who sowed the good seed. Others, less bigoted and bitter, do not, indeed, consider that the weeds are the genuine produce of the field, but they persist in holding—in spite of our LORD's declaration—that if the field is divine it should bear no weeds or very few. They compare the weeds that grow in this divinely hedged and planted field with the weeds that grow in the wilderness outside, and they say that they are equally plentiful and equally noxious. Thus a recent *History of Crime in England* makes much of its prevalence in the Middle Ages as an argument against the claims of the Catholic Church. Without admitting or denying the facts alleged, I reply that our LORD's field is known neither by the absence nor by the fewness of the weeds, but by the quality of the grain.

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Such a harvest of sanctity as it has produced was not gathered from seed sown by the hand of man, nor was it produced by human cultivation. We must not be scandalised if we find weeds in the Church's field of a peculiarly loathsome sort. As our LORD was set for the fall as well as for the resurrection of many, so the Blessed Sacrament is death to the wicked no less than life to the good. It is certain that there are phases of wickedness and degrees of malice in Catholic countries, arising from the abuse of this sacrament, which will not be found where abandonment of faith and loss of priesthood have made this kind of sacrilege impossible. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that, as a consequence of the lively faith and piety and daily communions of the first Christians, they were fruitful in every kind of good work; yet this beautiful description is followed by the awful history of Ananias and Sapphira tempted by Satan to lie to the Holy Ghost and plotting to defraud the Church. And it can hardly be rash to attribute this terrible fall, in the midst of such examples of virtue and in the presence of countless miracles, to the blinding and stupefying effects of sacrilegious communions, when we read St Paul's warning to the Corinthians: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgement to himself, not discerning the Body of the LORD. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep."\*

Could we then read aright the history of the Church in any land, we should be filled with awe at the terrible judgements of God for graces neglected and holy things profaned, as much as with joy and gratitude for graces bearing fruit in sanctity and salvation.

Let me, however, say that, although I shall not omit to note abuses and crimes, so far as may serve for warning or move to reparation, I shall seek by preference examples of piety and love. And this for more than one reason. First, because other writers have more than sufficiently gathered up tales of scandal and catalogued deeds of impiety. I cannot excuse in this respect even our old Catholic chroniclers. Instead of imitating the manner of Venerable Bede, and gladly putting on record all that could edify, or, when obliged as faithful historians to recount evil deeds, doing so with evident shame and grief, too many monastic historians, with gossiping avidity, have collected, and related with an almost prurient minuteness, the shame of monks and abbots, of priests and bishops. But these, at least, were priests writing for priests, and in a learned language; and it would be well for our modern historians to remember, when they gloat with indecent delight over the satirical pages of some medieval writers, that those writers are all priests; that none are so unsparing of the faults of their own order as the clergy; and that the very bitterness and exaggeration which often characterise their denunciations prove the loftiness of the standard by which priestly failings were ever judged.

It is needless then for me to repeat these well-known stories. At the very beginning of the Reformation the history of a thousand years back was ransacked for dirt to fling at the Catholic Church; and from the pages of the writers whose works form the Parker Society's publications, such matters have passed into innumerable modern histories and books of controversy.

A second reason for giving more prominence to what was excellent than to what was defective in ancient piety is this: that irregularities from their very nature are salient, attract attention at the time, and get recorded for future generations; while humble, unobtrusive piety, simple obedience, and regular observance find few chroniclers. No one who has not sought diligently in

\* 1 Cor. xi, 29, 30.



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ancient documents can easily form a conception of the difficulty of glean- ing information regarding matters which, from the nature of the case, must have been of daily and almost hourly occurrence. In the long series of historical books of the Old Testament, ranging through decades of centuries, how seldom is the Sabbath mentioned! If all that is said of its observance were brought together, it would scarcely occupy the space given to the relation of one enormous crime.\* Hence the extreme fallaciousness of mere negative arguments; hence the undue prominence given to evil over good in almost every record of human affairs. Let anyone search through the five large volumes called *Annales Monastici*, published by the Master of the Rolls, containing the chronicles of several large abbeys in different parts of England, and reaching through many hundred years, he will not find even one page describing the daily service of the church or the acts of piety of the monks. Why should the annalist describe what everyone knew and daily witnessed? It would have seemed as natural to chronicle the daily rising of the sun and the effect of its rays upon the world. Indeed, there is a singular analogy between what is said of the weather and of the Blessed Sacrament. The annalists place on record how there was an earthquake throughout England in 1089; how a comet with two tails appeared in 1097; and mock suns in 1104; how at one time the Thames was almost dried up, and how at another it overflowed its banks; how thunder was heard on the feast of the Holy Innocents in 1249, while snow fell at the end of May in 1251. They tell of eclipses, murrains, severe winters, droughts, signs and portents. But they never describe the verdure of spring, the genial heat of summer, the fruitfulness of autumn; they never describe the full river flowing peacefully, or the midnight skies covered with brilliant stars. In the same way, if a church is burnt in an incursion of the enemy, if a murder is committed within the walls of the sanctuary, if the sacred vessels are stolen from the altars, if the holy rites cease during an interdict, such events are chronicled. But the daily service of the church, the fervent communions, the prayers poured out before the altar, the acts of faith and charity—all these, as a matter of course, are scarcely heeded.

This is most natural, but it presents to us, who are not eyewitnesses, both a danger and a difficulty. The danger is that of dwelling on the exception rather than on the rule, of generalizing the rare abuses as if they were the acknowledged use. The difficulty is that even those who see the folly and wickedness of such judgements are perplexed and often baffled in their efforts to recall the genuine history of the past. There is a great truth in a remark of Sir Walter Scott: "The traditional recollections concerning the monks themselves are exceedingly faint, contrasted with the beautiful and interesting monuments which they have left behind them. The people can tell nothing but that such a race existed and inhabited the stately ruins of these monasteries. The quiet, slow and uniform life of these recluse beings glided on, it may be, like a dark and silent stream, *fed from unknown sources*, and vanishing from the eye without leaving any marked trace of its course."

Since the days of Sir Walter Scott a great deal has been written to illustrate the lives of the monks and the effect of their life on the laws and civilization of the country. But it is still true that the *sources* of that silent fertilizing stream have been inadequately searched. The principal source which fed the stream of Catholic life, whether among monks or laymen, was the Blessed Sacrament; and it is to its investigation that this treatise is confined. What

\* As, for example, that of the Benjaminites and its punishment (Judges xix-xxi).

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

has been said of the scantiness of information, and the difficulty of rightly adjusting what we have, must plead for me if I have but imperfectly succeeded in my attempt.

The words of Sir Walter Scott, just quoted, remind us that the public is not equally acquainted with every part of Catholic worship. The building is more familiar than the altar which was its principal feature; the altar and its ornaments are more generally known than the liturgy; and the liturgy is better understood than the faith and devotion which gave life to it. I propose, therefore, to dwell principally on what is least known, though by far the most important. It will be sufficient for my purpose to touch on architecture, metal-  
lotechny, embroidery, just so far as they served devotion, since fuller details can be found in works already written and of easy access. Even to ritual and liturgy I shall give but a subordinate place. "The end of the commandment," says the Apostle, "is charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith."\* Whatever can illustrate these things, however minute, I can never count trivial, and shall gladly record; whatever neither springs from them, nor leads to them, nor teaches about them, however great, I gladly lay aside.

The history of the Blessed Sacrament is, however, mainly a secret one. Though it is the fountain-head of the life of the Church, yet the waters of life are conveyed from it by hidden channels, and life and growth, even when visible in the results, are too gradual and too complicated to be observed by human eyes. Air and sunshine, water and soil, are all necessary for the plant, yet who shall trace the tender green of the leaves, the brilliant hues of the flowers, or the delicious fragrance of both to their component elements, and analyse the process of the transformation? So, in the garden of the Church, prayer and preaching, sacrament and worship, pastoral vigilance and fraternal union, joy and suffering, all work together to produce the flowers of sanctity; and among all these influences the most universal and most efficient is unquestionably that of the Holy Eucharist. But it would be in many cases a rash attempt to assign a special trait of sanctity or this or that heroic act to its operation. I shall not, therefore, venture further than to record some works of piety, generosity, charity and endurance which had for their explicit object this sacred mystery; or such effects as can be unmistakably traced to it.

And here I must make a candid confession. I have been very often tempted to throw these notes aside, from a deep sense not only of my own incapacity to deal with so awful and mysterious a theme, but of the intrinsic inadequacy of the materials themselves to do justice to it, however skilfully they might be handled. Let me illustrate my meaning by what may happen to a botanist. He has spent years in collecting specimens of every variety of one class of flowers. He has penetrated forests, climbed mountains, crossed the ocean. Gradually his portfolios have been filled; his specimens, dried, arranged, catalogued, are almost complete. Two or three of the rarest known varieties alone are wanting, while several new specimens unknown to former botanists give to his collection a special value. He presents it to a museum; it will interest enthusiastic botanists like himself. Even unscientific amateurs may gaze with pleasure at certain forms and colours. But the collector himself has an experience he can never communicate. Each little dead flower calls up before him not only the brighter picture of its living self, but also the very landscape that surrounded it. He sees again the bleak moor, the dense wood, the lonely

\* 1 Tim. i, 5.



## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

mountain where it grew. He remarks once more the nature of its soil, the state of the atmosphere, the accompanying vegetation. And beside such physical facts as he would at the time have noted down for after use in a botanic treatise, the faded blossom brings to his mind a personal vision full of joy. He remembers his weary searches, his frequent disappointments, all compensated for on that joyful evening when, just before sunset, he at last found that long-sought and unique specimen. The view from the mountain has indeed no scientific connexion with the flower, nor was it one of the conditions of its growth, yet in the mind of the collector the two things are indissolubly united. The adventures of that successful day, the valleys that were searched in vain, the other flowers that were either disregarded or carefully gathered, but which do not belong to *this* collection—these things are all vividly pictured in the collector's mind. If he is a simple enthusiast, he will expect others to share in his enthusiasm. If not, he will resign himself to what is inevitable, satisfied that, though he knows that only a few trained botanists will be able to appreciate the special value of his collection, it is not a useless contribution to science. His personal adventures, his toils, his disappointments are his own affair. They had their reward, and the remembrance of them is a pleasure. But it is incommunicable.

I may say the same of my Eucharistic gleanings. I cannot hope to make others share my own enthusiasm; but I do regret that my specimens are so completely separated from their surroundings, and I cannot show by pen or pencil where my flowers grew, and why they grew there and could not grow elsewhere. I do not regret that my readers will never know, nor care to know, how many books I have searched to no purpose, or that one little fact told in three lines of text or buried in a footnote cost more labour, greater research, than a whole chapter of wider interest—these are authors' secrets and belong to authors alone; but I do feel that an incident taken from the life of a saint loses its interest, and nearly all its teaching power, when separated from its context in that life. To many of my readers the names of Cuthbert, Aldhelm, Thomas of Hereford, Margaret of Scotland will probably be little more than names. They bring no memories in their train; so that when I tell how Cuthbert received the viaticum in his hermit's cell, how Aldhelm by the music of his harp drew the peasantry to Mass, how Thomas could not offer the Holy Sacrifice without tears, how Margaret contended against priests and bishops for the Easter communion, very little of the full meaning of these facts will have been conveyed to the reader. Their moral force or persuasiveness depends on the beauty of the characters represented by those names; but I cannot write a biography of all whom I must mention. The same may be said of national events. I am compelled to treat of them only partially, from an exclusive point of view, however diligently and impartially I myself have tried to study them.

All this may seem very egotistical, and evidence that I have not the skill to handle historic themes. Be it so! Yet dried flowers, severed from the stem, pressed, dried, grouped and catalogued, are, at the best, a poor record of the groves and vales and hills where they grew; of the dews and rains, the days and nights, the storms and sunshine that made them what they were.

I am so far from apologizing for the multitude of quotations, that I consider this the real value of my book. It is a compilation for the most part from rare works, or from works such as are out of the reach of ordinary readers. In nearly all cases I have drawn from first sources, and have care-

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fully indicated my authority whenever I have admitted an exception to this rule.\*

I might have called my treatise a basket of fragments; for the history of the Blessed Sacrament reminds one of that of the multiplication of the loaves related in the Gospel. "When He had commanded the multitude to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and two fishes, and looking up to heaven He blessed and brake and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat and were filled. And they took up what remained, twelve full baskets of fragments."† This miracle is emblematical of the great sacramental banquet which has been going on for ages, and at which so many nations have been seated in the unity of the Catholic Church. "For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of the One Bread."‡ St Mark tells us that the multitude sat down in ranks by hundreds and fifties.§ I have not attempted to write the history of the whole banquet, but of one group only, that which has feasted in the island of Great Britain. As one who has shared in the feast, who has eaten and been satisfied, I have helped to gather up the broken fragments which tell of the wondrous miracle. May He who said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost,"|| accept the basket or handful which I offer to His glory, as a token of my gratitude, love and adoration!

\* I should most willingly here have recorded my obligations and my gratitude for literary assistance; but as my principal benefactor wishes to remain unknown, I must be content to thank the superiors of ecclesiastical colleges and religious houses who have most kindly given me access to their libraries. I have thus been able to profit by the rich collections at

Ushaw, Oscott, Ampleforth, St Edmund's (Ware), St Thomas's (Hammersmith), St Michael's (Hereford), and other places. My obligations to personal friends are too numerous to mention. May none of them go unrewarded!

† Matt. xiv, 19, 20.

§ Mark vi, 40.

‡ 1 Cor. x, 17.

|| John vi, 12.



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# THE ILLUSTRATIONS

## The Mass of St Gregory, from the wood engraving by Albert Dürer

Frontispiece

THIS was a favourite Eucharistic subject both in England and all over the Continent during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The history of the legend is very obscure, but many authorities connect it with the

miracle, first recorded in the eighth century Northumbrian Life of St Gregory, by which, through the prayers of the Saint, the Real Presence in the sacred Host was made sensible to the eyes of an unbelieving Roman matron.

## The Ardagh Chalice

page 19

THIS masterpiece of Celtic workmanship was found near Ardagh in 1868. It is

probably of the tenth or eleventh century. See note on p. 143.

## Stole from St Cuthbert's Tomb

31

THIS is the most important and authentic example of early church embroidery now in existence. The original, when found, was in five pieces, and is conjecturally restored in the engraving. An inscription worked upon it

attests that it was made for Bishop Frithestan, of Winchester, by the order of Queen Ælflæd (the wife of Edward the Elder). It must therefore have been worked between the years 905 and 916. See Raine's *St Cuthbert*, pp. 204-208.

## A Priest saying Mass, from an Ivory at Frankfort

41

THIS ivory diptych of the ninth or early tenth century, of which the companion panel is now preserved at Rusthall House, Tunbridge Wells, probably offers the most interesting known delineation of a solemn High Mass during the Carolingian period. The two-handled ministerial chalice, the basilica arrangement of the church so that the priest faces the people, the circle of deacons behind and subdeacons in front, the candles placed not upon but behind the altar, with

many other points all deserve attention. Although there is no reason for regarding this ivory as of English workmanship, the Saxon form of the characters, which, though very minute, can be plainly read in the original upon the open pages of the Missal, reminds us that Germany not only derived much of its Christianity from English missionaries like Boniface and Willibrord, but learned much of its scholarship from such English teachers as Alcuin.

## Harold seeking the Church at Bosham, from the Bayeux Tapestry

49

THIS is probably meant to represent the act of reverence performed by our ancestors upon entering a church, and it pre-

serves what may be regarded, poor as it is, as the most authentic delineation available of a country church in Anglo-Saxon times.

## Chasuble of St Thomas of Canterbury

79

THE authenticity of this relic of St Thomas, still to be seen at the Cathedral of Sens, seems to be generally admitted (See, e.g., L. de Farcy, *La Broderie de l'onzième Siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, p. 122, plate

11), although that of the mitre preserved in the same collection is very doubtful. There is much more beauty of detail in the gold orphreys of this chasuble than can be shown in the engraving.

## Sanctus Bell, from British Museum MS. Royal, 10 E IV

99

IT does not appear that this depicts the act of the elevation. We may, therefore, refer it rather to the moment of the Sanctus. The

Sanctus Bell often hung in a bell-cot or in the belfry with the bigger bells. Note the corporal folded back over chalice and serving as a pall.

## St Dunstan

111

THIS sketch is copied from a miniature in a British Museum manuscript (Royal 10, A. XIII) of the thirteenth century. The original is an excellent specimen of the art

of the period, and the colours are extremely brilliant; but it is not, of course, near enough to the time of St Dunstan to be regarded as a portrait.

## Receiving Communion

147

THIS is taken from MS Royal 2 B. VII at the British Museum, a manuscript of the fourteenth century. It is curious that Communion is apparently being given by a deacon; at any rate we should expect him, if he were a priest, to be vested in a chasuble. Another miniature in the same manuscript seems to

represent the giving of Communion under the species of wine. In this latter case it would be natural that a deacon should officiate, and in that miniature also he is without a chasuble; but a bishop stands by fully vested in mitre, chasuble, etc., and blesses the chalice in the deacon's hands.



# THE ILLUSTRATIONS

## Eucharistic Dove, used for the suspension of the Blessed Sacrament 169

THIS seems to be a re-construction by M. Viollet le Duc, but several authentic specimens are preserved abroad. No English

example is known to exist; indeed, it was probably not a common form of ciborium in England.

## The Hessett Pyx Cloth 177

THIS is apparently an authentic specimen, surviving from pre-Reformation days, of the cloth used to veil the pyx or cup in which the Blessed Sacrament hung over the altar. It is preserved in the church of Hessett, Suffolk. "It is of square shape, measur-

ing 2 feet 4 each way, made of linen worked into a pattern by the withdrawal of some threads and the knotting of others. Around it is a silk fringe of rose and yellow." See Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, p. 41.

## The Chalice found at Dolgelly in 1890 207

THIS Eucharistic vessel is  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches high, and the paten is  $7\frac{5}{16}$  inches in diameter. It bears an inscription, *Nicolaus me fecit de herefordie* (sic). The date is considered to be

about 1230. This specimen is pronounced to be "unquestionably the finest early English chalice and paten that have yet come to light." See, *Archæologia* Vol. LIII, p. 576.

## The Ordination of St Guthlac 231

THIS twelfth century illumination (in Harley Roll v. 6 at the British Museum) has many points of interest. It represents the rite in the Ordination service known as the

*porrectio instrumentorum*. The form of the chasuble, mitre and chalice are all characteristic of the period. The hooded cope with its large morse is also noteworthy.

## Henry V of England and the Image of Pity 253

THIS is taken from Manuscript Royal 2 B. 1 at the British Museum, which belonged to Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and must be older than 1426. It probably commemorates the young King's devotion to

that special form of Eucharistic symbolism which is exemplified also in "The Mass of St Gregory" serving as a frontispiece to the present volume. See *The Month*, September, 1908.

## The Easter Sepulchre at Heckington, Lincolnshire 273

THE original is about 10 feet in height by 5 feet 6 inches broad. The four canopied panels at the base are each occupied by a

sleeping soldier. In the middle stage we have a sculptured representation of the Resurrection with a recess for the Blessed Sacrament.

H. T.





# THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN GREAT BRITAIN

## PART THE FIRST

### CHAPTER I. THE EARLY BRITISH CHURCH

**S**T JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, writing in the fourth century, made use of a remarkable comparison in order to illustrate the propagation of our LORD's sacramental presence throughout all centuries, and over the entire globe. "It is not man," he says, "who causes the oblation to become the Body and Blood of CHRIST, but it is CHRIST Himself who was crucified for us. The priest, representing CHRIST, stands and pronounces the words, but the power and the grace are from GOD. 'This is My Body,' He says. This word transforms the oblations. And just as the words 'Increase and multiply and fill the earth' were once spoken, but throughout all time give to our human nature the power of generation, so also the words 'This is My Body' once pronounced produce a perfect sacrifice at each table in the churches, from that day to this, and from now to our LORD's second advent."

It would deeply interest us, could we discover at what period of the world's history, in obedience to the command to multiply and fill the earth, a human being first set foot on the island of Great Britain, and who was that adventurer. But this will never be known. No rifled barrow of our Celtic or Turanian predecessors is ever likely to give up this secret. And so, too, there is no probability that any document still awaits discovery which will solve the controversy as to who first preached Christianity in Britain, or what priest erected the first altar, and first pronounced the words of consecration which made this island not merely the dwelling-place of man, but of EMMANUEL, "GOD with us."\*

It does not fall within the scope of this work to discuss in detail the origin and character of the early British Church, any further than regards the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is, however, so truly the centre of a whole group of doctrines, practices and institutions, that, when the faith on that one sacrament is known, the character of the whole religion is determined.

Gildas has been often understood to say that Christianity was spread in Britain in the time of Tiberius, but he is speaking of the propagation of Christianity in general, not of its introduction into Britain. Nothing more can be gathered from him than that it was introduced and propagated between the time of the Apostles and the year 297, from which date he really begins his history. Tertullian, however, writing in 208, says that "the places of the Britons unvisited by the Romans were yet subject to CHRIST and believed in Him." Origen also, writing twenty years later, declared that "the virtue of our LORD and SAVIOUR is with those who are separated from our world in Britain." These distinct testimonies of well-informed men show that the faith must have been long propagated in Britain to have spread even beyond the Roman domination, and that it was by no means confined to Roman soldiers or colonists, but had been preached to and received by the natives as well. And this contemporary evidence is quite in harmony with the later testimony of Venerable Bede as to

\*[On Christianity in Roman Britain, see Haverfield in *Eng. Hist. Review*, xi, 420 ff.]

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the conversion of King Lucius, and in no way contrary to the existence of Christianity in Britain at a much earlier date.\*

There seem to be two popular errors in the judgements formed about British Christianity. One is to suppose a great change to have taken place between that form of it preached in the first or second century and the form depicted by Gildas and Bede in the fifth and sixth. Of such a change there is no proof whatever. It was entirely unknown and unsuspected by the writers to whom we owe our knowledge; and the theory of an early corruption of Christianity is due solely to the difference between the testimony of authentic history and the preconceived fancies of certain Protestant writers as to the nature of Apostolic teaching. But, on the other hand, there are many who seem to forget how long a period was filled by the British Church, and how many changes in outward circumstances may take place in a country during the space of five or six centuries. It need hardly be said that the painted Britons described by Cæsar, living in dense forests, have very little resemblance to the civilized Britons of the fourth century, some of whom were famous for their skill as lawyers, and who in general had become unwarlike and effeminate from too much luxury. The Romans were as capable of imposing their civilization on a country as the English of to-day; and anyone who will consider the results of English occupation of a country like India or New Zealand for a century or less, may form some conception of the changes wrought in Britain by the Roman occupation of more than three hundred years. In the Britain of the fifth century there were numerous large cities, with fine public buildings, besides many towns and fortified places. Every city had its magistrates and civil order. The imperial court had often been fixed in Britain. It is probable that some of the British princes held sway recognized by their Roman masters, as in our Indian Empire at present. "What Calcutta is now to London, London or York was then to Rome." Whitaker says that "the provinces into which Britain was then divided seem to have attained a more considerable degree of refinement and to have existed in a more flourishing condition than any of them knew for very many centuries afterwards" (i.e., after the Saxon invasion and desolation). "All the improvements of the Romans had necessarily been introduced. Our mines were worked with the greatest skill, and our towns were decorated with baths, temples, market-places and porticoes."†

Of course this does not mean that the whole country was cultivated or the whole population civilized. At the present day what wretched remains of savage tribes still linger on in the territory of the United States; and in any one of our own great cities what poverty coexists with wealth, what ignorance with science, what brutality with refinement!

Thus is explained the varying language of St Jerome. Describing what he had himself seen, at one time he draws a fearful picture of the morals of some pagan Britons, called Attacots, a warlike tribe settled in Galloway, whom Theodosius had enlisted in his army. These were cannibals, and lived in promiscuous sexual intercourse. At another time he is full of admiration for the piety

\*Though Burton calls the story of Lucius a fable, and Milman a legend, Dr Bright considers that they had no grounds for denying it (*Chapters of Early English Church History*, p. 4). [More recent authorities, however, do not regard the incident as historical. See Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, vol. i, p. cii; Plummer, *Bede's Opera Historica*, II, 14.]

†*History of Manchester*, tom. II, p. 6. Writing of Agricola's government of the natives at so early a date

as A.D. 79, Tacitus says that "Paulatim discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus et balnea et conviviorum elegantiam." Skene says: "The natives soon began to study the Roman language and to adopt their dress, and by degrees acquired a taste for the luxurious and voluptuous life of the Romans" (*Celtic Scotland*, I, 44). Numerous remains of Roman baths have been found north of the Humber, no less than in the southern parts of the island.



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of British Christians. "The Briton," he says, "separated from our world, if he has made much progress in religion, leaves the western sun and seeks Jerusalem, a place known to him only by report and the authority of Holy Scripture."\* And as a nation may comprise different classes, so too a Church has its different epochs. We must be careful, therefore, not to generalize hastily, or to conclude that the British Church was always in the relaxed state, as regards discipline, in which St Gildas describes that of his own day in the middle of the sixth century.

On the other hand, we may safely generalize as to its faith. If British Christians flocked to Jerusalem and Rome, it was because in those cities, and in all intervening countries, they found the same faith and the same worship which they had learnt at home. This is no conjecture. The testimony of St Jerome, a great reader and a great traveller, is most explicit. "The Church of the city of Rome," he says, "is not different from that of the whole world. Gaul and Britain and Africa and all barbarous nations adore one CHRIST and follow one rule of truth."† St John Chrysostom is no less clear. "Even the British Isles," he says, "have felt the power of the Word, for there, too, churches and altars have been erected; there too, as in the extreme east, or beside the Euxine, or in the south, men may be heard discussing points in Scripture, with different voices, but not with different belief."‡ It is true that their countryman, Gildas, accuses them of being fond of novelty and of receiving heresies easily, in allusion to the inroads made first by Arianism and then by Pelagianism. But this very accusation supposes the possession of the right faith by the majority, and of a rule of faith, common to the whole world, by which heresy might be discerned. In order also to repel the heresies, the British bishops either went abroad to take part in Councils of the Church, as at Arles in 314, and probably at Nicæa in 325,§ and at Sardica in 347, and again at Ariminum in 359; or they sent to the Continent to bring over champions of the truth, as St Victricius of Rouen in the fourth century, St Germanus of Auxerre, St Lupus of Troyes, and St Patrick in the fifth. It was hardly necessary, therefore, for a recent learned writer|| to vindicate the orthodoxy of the Britons, as if against St Gildas and St Bede; for neither of those historians for a moment supposes that the Britons as a Church differed in faith from themselves or from the rest of the Catholic Church throughout the world. They merely assert a tendency in the people to certain novel speculations, but a tendency which was met and overcome. Certainly at a later period, when intercourse with the Continent was somewhat less frequent, instead of being prone to novelty, the Britons were found to be obstinately tenacious of even minor points of discipline.

Since then the Christianity of Britain was the same as that of the rest of the Catholic Church: even had we no explicit testimony regarding the Blessed Eucharist, we should still know the faith and practice of the British Church; and if need were we might rightly expand what is brief and implicit in the mention of British institutions by the fuller details supplied by contemporary history. Thus, when St John Chrysostom says that in Britain there are churches and altars of sacrifice (*θυσιαστήρια*), we know the force he gives to this word

\* St Jerome, *adv. Jov.* ii; Ep. 44 et 84. On the Attacotti, see Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i, 101, 106.

† "Nec altera Romanæ urbis Ecclesia, altera totius orbis existimanda est. Et Gallia et Britannia et Africa . . . et omnes barbaræ nationes unum Christum adorant, unam observant regulam veritatis."—Ep. 101.

‡ *Contra Judæos et Gentiles*, c. 12.

§ [See the lists in Gelzer, *Patrum Nicænorum Nomina*, Leipzig, 1898; and C. H. Turner, *Ecclesiæ Occidentalis Monumenta*, Oxford, 1899.]

|| Bright, *Chapters*, p. 12.

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by almost numberless passages in his works, where he maintains the doctrines of the Real Presence and of Sacrifice. But it will not be necessary to borrow elucidations from other countries. We have native testimony, if not great in quantity, yet explicit and far-reaching.

Take this one fact. Bishops of York, London and Caerleon were at the Council of Arles in the year 314.\* Among other canons they decreed that the Bishop of Rome should by letters promulgate the uniform observance of Easter through the whole world; that no one could marry again during his wife's lifetime; and that seven bishops, or at least three, should take part in the consecration of a bishop. Here, then, we have a Church, governed by bishops, in full communion with the Holy See and with the rest of the Catholic world, in the full consciousness of unity of faith and worship, and taking measures for its perpetuity. We see the care with which the sacrament of holy orders is watched over in the persons of those fathers of the priesthood on whom depends the propagation of our LORD's sacred Body and of His mystical Body the Church; while a similar watchfulness is extended to the sacrament of marriage, on the sanctity of which rite depends the orderly propagation of society, both natural and supernatural. In the mention of the great festival of Easter we see a whole system of worship, a cycle of fasts and feasts making up the ecclesiastical year, any disturbance in which would be like bringing confusion into the movements of the planets circling in their complex harmony.

Let us look into some of the details of the system thus revealed; and in the present chapter no document shall be quoted which is not purely British, and belonging to a period antecedent to the coming of St Augustine for the conversion of the Saxon invaders. Besides the history or letters of Gildas we have a code of penitential canons drawn up by St Gildas in 570, and similar decrees made by St David at nearly the same date.† From these we find that the British Church bore a very monastic character. Monasteries of monks and nuns abounded, and the bishops seem in general to have lived in monasteries, and probably belonged to the regular clergy. Yet there were also secular priests resident in their presbyteries. We have mention of priests (called both presbyteri and sacerdotes), of deacons, subdeacons and lectors. Among the few details of ritual we have the significant fact that the hands of the priest were anointed with chrism at his ordination. And this is in harmony with the doctrine of Gildas on priestly authority, for he represents the clergy as both exercising the power of the keys and offering sacrifice to God. Should priest or deacon have been put to public penance for some great crime, even after its accomplishment, there remained this terrible penalty: "Henceforward it is unlawful for the priest to offer sacrifice, or for the deacon to hold the chalice"; these being then, as now, the distinguishing offices and privileges of priests and deacons.‡

In order to offer sacrifice "decently and in order," a special and consecrated place had to be chosen, as soon as this was possible. How soon this was we do

\*[Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, vol. 1, 7; Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, 1, 1275.]

†For the authenticity of these see Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, vol. 1, pp. 113-120, and Preface, p. x. In their present authentic form they were not known to Lingard, and therefore are not quoted by him. [Although a certain amount of obscurity rests upon the precise provenance of the early penitential canons attributed to Gildas and others, still the whole tendency of recent research has been to confirm the belief in their early date. All the canons referred to in

this chapter are also to be found in the Penitential of Cummean, of which a seemingly reliable text has recently been published by J. Zetinger in the *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht* for 1902. It may be stated with confidence that this Penitential was drawn up either in Scotland or in Ireland in the middle of the seventh century.]

‡The Council of Arles, at which British bishops were present, had, in its fifteenth canon, rebuked some deacons for usurping the functions of the priesthood in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.



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not know. Venerable Bede tells us that the Britons had their churches before the persecution of Diocletian, since "after its cessation, in 313, they *rebuilt* the churches which had been levelled with the ground, founded and adorned basilicas of the holy martyrs, celebrated festivals and performed the sacred rites (*sacra conficiunt*) with clean hearts and mouths." This he took from Gildas, who, without the help of documents, could know the history of the churches which were still standing when he wrote. Most of these churches were of wood, yet stone churches were not unknown. Venerable Bede speaks of St Augustine recovering one "built by the ancient Roman Christians" in Canterbury, which he consecrates in the name of our holy SAVIOUR; and this appears to have been of stone, as well as that of St Martin in the same city. According to a good archæological authority,\* "the Cornish churches of the fifth to the seventh centuries, built by the Irish missionaries, were generally provided, as in Ireland, with a well [for baptisms], with a simple parallel chancel, separated by a low stone step [from the body of the building], with a stone altar, and a stone bench table."

St Germanus came over to Britain to preach in the fifth century. In his life, which was written by Constantius a few years after the saint's death, we read of a church of boughs being erected in the midst of the camp, in which the soldiers might celebrate the Easter festival. It was after hearing Mass and receiving Communion in this rural tent that the newly-baptized Christians, dressed in their white robes, gained the famous Alleluia victory.†

But whether the church were of wood or of stone, the altar, which was its principal feature, was nearly always made of stone. It is called by Gildas *ara* or *altare*, and he adds the epithets *holy* and *venerable*;‡ and when he is reproaching his nation, or certain members of it, for their disregard of oaths, the expression he uses is the following: "When they have stood before the altars, pledging their oaths, they go away and think no more of it than if they had sworn upon dirty stones."§ In another place he inveighs against a native prince or tyrant named Constantine, who "with his accursed sword rent the most holy altar, so that the altar-cloths purpled as with gore stained the place of the heavenly sacrifice."|| The shape of the altars we have no direct means of ascertaining, though they were probably not oblong parallelograms as at present, but square and small, standing on two columns, or perhaps even one.

The "most holy sacrifice," the "heavenly sacrifice" (*sacrosancta sacrificia, cæleste sacrificium*), was called Mass or missa, then as now. The liturgy with which it was celebrated was not in the Celtic but the Latin tongue, and this,

\*Mackenzie Walcott, *Church and Conventual Arrangement*. According to Willis (*Canterbury Cathedral*, pp. 20-32), St Augustine placed his altar at the west end of his cathedral. Dean Stanley conjectures that he did this in imitation of the altar of St Peter's in Rome (*Historical Mem. of Canterbury*, pp. 39-41).

†[The Life of St Germanus, as hitherto commonly printed, has been extensively interpolated (see Levison in the *Neues Archiv*, 1903), but the details here referred to belong to the original text of Constantius.]

‡"Inter altaria stantes," "sacrosancta altaria," "venerabilibus aris." These expressions suppose several altars in the same church.

[Prof. Hugh Williams in his edition of Gildas (1899-1901), edited for the Cymmrodorion Society, equally notes that the phrase, *inter altaria*, seems to suggest the existence of more than one altar in the church (p. 68). He also says that we cannot assume

for certain that the altars were of stone. "An early Irish tract in the *Lebar Brecc*, describing the mode of consecrating a church, proves plainly that the altar there was of wood, because the bishop carves crosses on the altar and church (also of wood)." It must be left to Celtic experts to decide how far the language of the original implies the *carving* as distinct from the mere marking of crosses upon the altar.]

§"Inter altaria jurando demorantes, ac hæc eadem ac si lutulenta paulo post saxa despicientes."

||"Sacrosancta altaria nefando ense laceravit, ita ut sacrificii cælestis sedem purpurea ac si coagulati cruoris pallia attingerent." He had just murdered two children. Dr Rock seems to understand this passage as if the altar-stone were covered with silk of purple dye (*Church of our Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 265). Dr Lingard supposes that the altar-linens were purpled with the blood spilt.

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too, not only during the Roman occupation, but for centuries after. It is uncertain whether the liturgy was Roman or Gallican.\* The difference, however, between these was not considerable; for when St Augustine consulted St Gregory about the difference in the "custom or rite of Masses" between the Roman and Gallican Churches, the Pope leaves him free either to choose between them or to modify one by the other. The variations were therefore unimportant. When the saintly missionary reached Britain and asked for intercommunion and help from the British bishops, he made some complaint about their observance of Easter and also about certain baptismal ceremonies, but none about the liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice. One of the penitential canons of St Gildas shows how scrupulously the forms of administration of sacraments were observed: "If anyone by mistake make any change in the sacred words *where danger is noted*, he will observe a three days' fast."

The Eucharistic rite was therefore not a mere communion. It was also a sacrifice. The very particles reserved for communion received their name from sacrifice among the Britons, as afterwards among the Saxons.\* "Si casu negligens quis sacrificium aliquod perdat," i.e., "If anyone by negligence let fall and lose a sacrifice," are the words of one of Gildas's canons. Thus we should say a Host, from Hostia, a victim. And the sacrifice was believed to avail not only to those who communicated, nor to those only who were present, but to the absent also; and it could be applied according to the intention and desire of the celebrating priest. One of the canons of Gildas says: "We may offer the sacrifice for good kings, not for bad ones, but priests may always offer for their bishops."

With regard to communion on the part of the laity we have no information. A canon of Gildas, appointing a penance for a secret sin committed by a boy twelve years old, shows that at a very early age children were admitted to confession;\* and we know that for many centuries it was the custom even for infants to communicate. That the Blessed Sacrament was reserved for the sick is also to be gathered from the canon already quoted, speaking of letting fall the sacred particle, for it is added, "leaving it to be devoured by beasts or birds," which shows that the accident is not supposed to have taken place in the church during the distribution of Holy Communion, but on the road or in the fields when the priest was carrying it to the sick. It is also no strained interpretation of the words, if we gather from them, what we know from other sources to have been the case,† that the sick communicated under one species only. It is certainly also a clear proof of the belief of the British Church in the Real Presence that the loss of the sacred particle, due not to deliberate sacrilege, but to accident arising from want of reverential care (*si quis casu negligens*), should merit for the priest no less a penance than a fast of three Quarantains or Lents.

These few details are almost all that has come down to us directly regarding

\*On this subject I must refer for a fuller discussion to the preliminary dissertation of Dr Forbes, late Anglican Bishop of Brechin, to his edition of the *Arbuthnot Missal*. [Despite the attention which has been devoted of late years to the Gallican, Mozarabic, Ambrosian and various other Western liturgies, it cannot be said that any sort of consensus of opinion has yet been arrived at even as regards classification. One of the primary difficulties is to determine what was the character of the Roman liturgy itself in the time of Gildas. We know little of its earlier forms except through the medium of books

of much later date. On the general question of the Celtic liturgies the reader may be referred to the compendious statement by Mr H. Jenner, F.S.A., given under that heading in the third volume of *The Catholic Encyclopædia*.]

†[This canon belongs rather to those attributed to St David. It appears again in the Penitential of Cummean, but in this case ten years old is the age specified. We cannot, perhaps, infer with any certainty that the boy himself was supposed to make the confession.]



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the celebration in South Britain, previous to the Saxon conquest, of that sacrament by which our LORD's passion was to be ever commemorated and applied to the souls of men.\* We are almost wholly ignorant of what we should most wish to know—the effect of our LORD's Presence on the lives of His disciples. We see, indeed, the monastic life in great esteem and much frequented by men and women, but we have few authentic details of the virtues practised by those tens of thousands of monks and nuns, and the penitential canons of St Gildas speak not of virtues but of crimes—of crimes possible even to those who made profession of the pursuit of holiness, though of course the existence of a code of penal law is no proof that crime is frequent. We see bishops watching over their flocks, with zeal for faith and true pastoral solicitude, but the same glimpse reveals the ravages of two heresies most contrary to the adorable Eucharist, since Arianism denied our LORD's Divinity, and Pelagianism the influence of His grace. Almost our only authority as to the moral state of the British Church is Gildas, and it would be contrary to all fair interpretation to generalize his strong language, as if what he says of his own day applied to all the centuries that had passed, or even then admitted no exceptions. J. R. Green has drawn a true picture of Gildas: "Ascetic, keenly religious in the whole tone of his mind and temper, clinging with a fierce contemptuous passion to the Roman tradition of the past, but vindicating as passionately the new moral truths with which Christianity fronted a world of licence, steeped to the lips in Biblical lore, orthodox with the traditional orthodoxy of the Celt, patriotic with the Celtic unreasoning hatred of the stranger, the voice of Gildas rings out like the bitter cry of one of those Hebrew prophets whose words he borrows, rebuking in the same tones of merciless denunciation the invader, the tyrant and the priest."† It is not, however, easy to understand why Mr Green should call Gildas's hatred of the stranger "unreasoning." The pagan Saxons had surely given good reason for such hatred. He wrote his history about a hundred years after the commencement of the barbarians' invasion. He was born in 516, the year of the great British victory of Mons Badonicus, which stopped the progress of the invaders for a time. He was about thirty years old when he wrote, and, though those years had been a time of peace, he had learned from men a few years older than himself what fearful sufferings had preceded them. He has described the people with their priests as taking refuge in their churches, and thereby only increasing the fury of their heathen enemies. The buildings are set on fire, and their occupants have to choose between death in the crackling flames within and death among the spears and swords outside. Wherever the heathen came, utter ruin and devastation, death or captivity, came with them.

Nor were Gildas's denunciations of his countrymen undeserved. During the fifty years of respite that were given them they fell into the vices which spring from luxury and intemperance, and provoked the anger of God to punish themselves, instead of propitiating His justice and themselves uniting in manly energy to resist the invaders. Gildas's sense of what was coming was really prophetic. He saw that the petty tyrants, without religion and without a sense of honour or of truth, would fall a prey before long to the cruel enemy. He looked to the sanctuary, and there he saw many priests living unworthily—"raro sacrificantes et nunquam puro corde inter altaria stantes." Reverence for our LORD's

\*[Almost the only fragment of Celtic liturgy which seems to be traceable to British as distinct from Scottish or Irish sources is an incomplete Mass in honour of St Germanus preserved in a ninth century MS. in the Bodleian Library. Even this fragment is Roman

in form, though it comes from St Germans (Llanal-edh) in Cornwall. See Warren, *Liturgy of Celtic Church*, p. 159.]

† Art. in *Saturday Review*, April 24, 1869.

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Presence and devotion to the holy Mass had perished among many. Therefore Gildas knew that chastisement was at hand. Yet certainly all were not corrupt; Gildas himself was one of a company of saints. St David was governing his Church in holy discipline. The penitential canons were being enforced, and while Britons assisted the Irish in holy legislation, many Irish saints came over to Britain, and have left their names to towns and churches and wells in Wales and Cornwall.

## CHAPTER II. THE PICTS AND THE SCOTS

"THIS island at present," wrote Venerable Bede in the eighth century, "in the languages of five nations examines and confesses one and the same science of the sublimest truth and true sublimity, viz. in those of the Angles, Britons, Scots and Picts, and Latins, and this last, by the study of the Scriptures, has become common to all the rest."\* This testimony to the absolute unity in faith of the different churches throughout Great Britain is confirmed by every document which has come down to us from whatever source. What we have already seen in the records of the early British Church, we find again in the early legislation of the Irish Church in the Penitential of St Columbanus, who carried the Irish discipline over the Continent of Europe, and in the life of his namesake, St Columba, who propagated the faith which he brought from Ireland throughout the north of Britain.

We shall confine our attention in the present chapter to *North Britain*, called in ancient times Alban, or Albania, or Caledonia.

Bede distinguishes between the languages of the Britons, Scots and Picts, and even attributes to these nations different origins; but it is now known that their languages were closely akin. Some have, indeed, hesitated about the Picts, thinking them to have been a branch of the Saxon family. But this is a groundless conjecture. "The Pictish," says Dr Reeves, "was undoubtedly a Celtic dialect, but more nearly allied to the British or Welsh than the Gaelic."† This explains why St Columba, as his biographer informs us, during his missionary journeys spoke to the Picts by an interpreter; though on other occasions, speaking to kings or Druids, who were more cultivated, he did not need one. The Picts occupied, during the early Christian centuries, the greater part of modern Scotland. The Northern Picts were those who dwelt beyond the Grampians; the Southern dwelt north of the Forth, but south of the mountains, i.e., in Kincardine, Forfar, Perth and Fife. The British kingdom of Strathclyde, reaching to modern Glasgow, and the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria, reaching to Edinburgh, divided between them the southern part of modern Scotland, with ever-varying boundary. The Scots were Irish who had settled in Argyle and the Isles, then called Dalraida. Scotia was the name of the home of the Scots, or the north of Ireland. It was not till the tenth century that it was given to a part of Caledonia, and three or four centuries more passed before it was extended to the whole of modern Scotland. But as Roman was a name given to one of Roman origin, whether born in Italy or in some Roman colony or possession, so Scot was the name of an Irishman, whether in Ireland or in the Irish settlement in North Britain. It has been much disputed at what period the Scots passed over into

\**History*, i, i. Lappenberg says: "The name, Picti, with painted bodies, but is a Roman corruption of Pight."—*England under the Anglo-Saxons*.

†Reeves's *Adamnan*, p. 163.



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Caledonia. According to Skene they were already Christians.\* But in any case it was from Ireland that they derived their Christianity. When first we meet with them in British history, it is as enemies and invaders of the country, leagued with the barbarous Picts. But in the period with which we are now concerned they have a very different character. They invade the territories of Britons, Picts and Saxons alike, but do not carry devastation. They leave their own country to enlarge the bounds of the Holy Church, and to enrich others with the worship and love of JESUS CHRIST.

After this rough outline of the geography and history of the tribes which occupied the north of Britain when Christianity made its first appearance among them, I will now gather together the few documents which throw any light on the history of the Blessed Sacrament in those regions, beginning with the Britons of Strathclyde and the Southern Picts, and then proceeding to the Scots and Northern Picts.

## I. THE NORTH BRITONS AND SOUTHERN PICTS

THE ROMANS had early carried their arms as far north as the Perth Grampians, but their hold upon any part of the island north of the Firths was very precarious. According to Tertullian, Christian missionaries had even gone in advance of the Roman arms; but whatever settlements they may have made must have been overthrown in the descents of Picts and Attacots both before and after the Roman departure in 408. It was during these troubled times that St Ninian, a Briton of Strathclyde, went to study in Rome. He is said to have been of royal family, and was probably a Christian from his childhood. Being made a bishop, he returned to his native country. He was not contented with reviving faith and devotion in the already Christian region between the Solway and the Clyde, but preached successfully among the Southern Picts. He built his episcopal church of stone in Wigton or Gallogway, and it was commonly called the White House (Candida Casa) or Whithern. His church still existed in the time of Venerable Bede, three centuries later, and was renowned as the resting-place of the body of St Ninian and many other saints. Near this church was the great British monastery of Rosnat, which was famous during the sixth century, and was much frequented by Irish scholars.† At the beginning of the eighth century, that part of Britain fell under the power of the Angles of Northumbria, who were Christians, and they substituted an English episcopate for the British one in the see of Whithern. Of this line Pechthelm was the first (A.D. 730), and he had several successors. The monastery of Rosnat was repopled with English monks, though there is no reason to think that any Britons were expelled. For in the absence of detail about this British and Pictish church, the one fact which stands out conspicuously is the perfect unity of faith and worship between the Christianity planted by St Ninian and that of the English Church of Bede and Alcuin. It is, therefore, from our intimate knowledge of this latter that we must supply what is unrecorded of the former. Bede, as we have seen, distinctly affirms that Britons, Scots, Picts and English professed "one and the same science of the truth." He calls Ninian "a most reverend and most holy bishop, who had been regularly instructed at Rome in the faith and mysteries of the truth." A most interesting letter of Alcuin also reveals to us that there were traditions regarding St Ninian, at the end of the eighth cen-

\**Chronicles of the Picts and Scots*, edited by W. Skene for the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

†Haddan and Stubbs, vol. 1, p. 120.

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tury, in Ninian's own church and among the English. He wrote to the monks serving the church of Candida Casa as follows: "I beg you to remember my name and to intercede for me in the church of our most holy father, Bishop Ninian, renowned for his many virtues, as I have lately learnt from my faithful pupils, the scholastics of the Church of York, in the poem they have sent me; and from the account they give me of his miracles I recognize his sanctity. Therefore I beg of you most earnestly that you recommend me to his intercession, that, by the pious prayers of your saintly father and your own, I may secure, through CHRIST's mercy, pardon of my sins, and come at last to the company of the saints who overcame the toils of the world, and have attained the crown of eternal glory. I have sent to the body of your holy father Ninian a veil of silk, that I may be remembered there and have a share in your and his intercession."\*

As the poem written by Alcuin's scholars has not come down to us, we cannot judge of the nature of the traditions on which he relied for his belief in the sanctity of St Ninian. But it must be remembered that if the Britons had long been driven from the south of England when Offa built the monastery of St Albans in 793, this was not the case at Whithern. The Britons were still there mingled with the Angles. There had been a succession of bishops and learned monks, and in all probability many documents now lost were then in existence.

In any case the religion planted by St Ninian was in existence and familiarly known to Bede and Alcuin and the monks at Whithern, and they saw that it was the same as their own. Yet it was certainly not derived from the Anglo-Saxons. Until the middle of the seventh century there had been little or no communication between the churches, and the two nations had been continually at war. Those, therefore, who would maintain that the religion of Bede and Alcuin, which taught the invocation of the saints and the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, was a corruption of primitive Christianity, must also maintain that the British Church of Strathclyde was also gradually corrupted, not by Roman or Saxon influence, but by a spontaneous process, and that these two independent corruptions resulted in a complete identity of doctrine and of practice. That this identity really existed in the seventh and eighth centuries is proved, not only by the testimonies already given, but also by other incidental evidence. In the year 680 St Wilfrid being in Rome, distinctly testified to the orthodoxy of the Britons, Scots and Picts. In a synod of 125 bishops, presided over by Pope Agatho, in preparation for the Council of Constantinople of the same year, against the Monothelites, St Wilfrid, as his friend and biographer Eddi relates, made a profession of the Catholic faith, not merely in his own name, but "for the whole north of Britain and of Ireland, and for the islands, inhabited by Angles, Britons, Scots and Picts." St Wilfrid's own episcopal authority extended over many of the Southern Picts, and Eddi tells us that he ordained priests and deacons in every place for their better instruction; but nothing is ever said of their being taught new doctrine or reconciled with the Church.

Again, when the Northumbrian king, Oswy, "subdued the greater part of the Picts to the dominion of the English," as Bede relates, an English bishop, named Trumwine, was appointed to rule over them, and fixed his see at Ebbw-curnig (Abercorn) on the Firth of Forth. In 685 the Picts threw off the English yoke, and Trumwine withdrew with his monks. Bede, who relates these political changes, says nothing of change of faith or worship. Lastly, in 721, Sedulius, a British bishop of Strathclyde, of Scottish race, and Fergustus, a Pict by birth

\*Haddan and Stubbs, II, 8; [and in *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, *Epist. Kar. Alvi*, II, 431.]



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and a bishop of the Scots, subscribed in Rome to a council held under Gregory II.

These few facts sufficiently prove that the Pictish Church was orthodox in all points, as orthodoxy was understood by all the churches in communion with the Holy See. Notwithstanding all this, there will be some who will find it difficult to believe that such invocation of the saints as Alcuin practised towards St Ninian in the eighth century had been practised by St Ninian himself in the fourth. Nor will the fact that St Ninian dedicated his church to St Martin on hearing of that holy bishop's death in 397 weigh with them as it should, accustomed as they are to the modern meaningless dedication of Protestant churches.

Fortunately we have a document which throws a vivid light on the meaning of that dedication. St Ninian is said to have visited St Martin at Tours when returning from Rome. St Martin had another friend, named Victricius, who was Archbishop of Rouen.

Victricius is thought by many to have been a Briton. After serving in the Roman army like St Martin, like St Martin he became a Christian, and subsequently a most zealous bishop, and is himself venerated as a saint. Now in the year 396, when St Ninian was building his cathedral and considering to whom it should be dedicated, St Victricius was invited over into Britain to help the British bishops to quell a disturbance arising from Arianism or Pelagianism or some other cause. On his return to Rouen he took part in a solemn translation of the relics of the Apostles and many other martyrs and virgins to his cathedral. He embodied the discourse he made on that occasion in a treatise *De Laude Sanctorum*. I take from it the following passage, in which he addresses the saints whose relics he was honouring: "O holy and venerable martyrs, you will pardon, I trust, my delay in coming to this solemnity, since it was in obedience to your precepts that I passed over into Britain, and was there detained. My fellow priests and bishops invited me to help in promoting peace. Since I was your soldier, I could not refuse a work like this. I knew that by the merit of your power you are everywhere, for heavenly glory is shut out from no spot of earth. Forgive me then if I have only tardily come to meet you at the fortieth mile of your journey. I was serving you in Britain, and was detained beyond the ocean by your honour. I attribute all [my success] to your majesty, since you are the body of CHRIST, and the spirit that dwells in you is divine. . . . I have then been executing in Britain the command of the LORD JESUS and yours, not indeed as I should have done, but as far as I could. In those who were wise I infused the love of peace, I taught it to the ignorant, and forced it on the reluctant—according to the Apostle being urgent in season and out of season—and by teaching and persuasion I found an entrance into their minds. But when either the place or my own weakness became a cause of temptation to me, I implored the help of your spirit. I did what those do in a great storm who navigate the sea: they implore the mercy of the Divine Majesty, rather than the skill of the pilot. For that JESUS who lives in you is able to calm the waves and restrain the winds while human art is of no avail."\*

If, then, it was by the help and invocation of the saints that one friend of St Martin was contending against heresy in the south of Britain, there is nothing more probable than that another friend of the same saint should be fighting against paganism with the same arms at the same time in the north of Britain. Thus St Ninian's dedication of his church to St Martin implied

\* [Ct. Vacandard, *Saint Victrice*, Paris, 1903, pp. 68, 127.]

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his urgent desire to secure for his people the constant intercession of that great saint, whose reputation had been so great even during his lifetime. And there was therefore nothing contrary to St Ninian's own practice in Alcuin's imploring the prayers of a saint.

Of the Southern Picts, after the death of St Ninian, we have no detailed history. St Palladius, St Serf and St Ternan are commemorated as their apostles in the fifth century; but there is one word of evil omen occurring in a letter of St Patrick which hints at a falling back into paganism, or at least into pagan immorality. In his letter to Coroticus, written before 493, St Patrick complains that that British prince had made a hostile incursion into Ireland, and had cruelly slain many Christian neophytes, while still wearing the white robes of their baptism, and had sold Christian women and children into slavery to the still heathen Scots or Irish and "to the most wicked, detestable and apostate Picts."\*

This expression does not of course imply that the whole nation had apostatized from CHRIST, but merely that there were some amongst them who by their cruelty, lust and contempt of baptism, acted as apostates. About a hundred years after the date of St Patrick's letter, St Kentigern or Mungo, a Briton from South Wales, laboured with great success in rekindling the faith of the Britons of Strathclyde and reforming their life. He fixed his episcopal see at Glasgow, and his diocese is thought to have extended from the Clyde to the Mersey, and from the Western to the Eastern sea. It has been already mentioned how in the next century the Angles of Northumbria encroached on this district and established an English bishopric at Whithern in 730. During the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, our information about the history of the south of Scotland, whether civil or religious, is exceedingly scanty, and there is nothing whatever to record regarding the Blessed Sacrament, its celebration or reception. It will be easier for the reader to picture in his own imagination the details which are unwritten, when he has perused what I am about to relate of the first celebrations of holy Mass in the western islands and in the north.

## II. THE NORTHERN PICTS

HAPPILY the life of St Columba, the apostle of the Northern Picts—or at least an account of his graces, visions, miracles and prophecies—has been written by one who, if not an eyewitness, yet conversed with eyewitnesses, and, as being of the saint's own family and his successor as abbot of Iona, had every means of acquiring authentic information. This writer is St Adamnan, and from his biography† I shall quote, word for word, those passages which allude to the Holy Eucharist. Before doing this, I will relate just so much of the external facts of St Columba's life as may be necessary to render the quotations intelligible.

He was born in Ireland in 520 of a royal family, and early embraced the ecclesiastical state, and became abbot and founder of several monasteries. At the age of forty-two he left Ireland and settled among his fellow-countrymen, the Scots of Dalraida (Argyle and the Isles), the king of which was his

\*The whole letter is very touching, and breathes throughout in its boldness and tenderness the spirit of St Paul. Some have thought that Coroticus was Ceredig, prince of Ceredigian or Cardigan. Skene considers that he was prince of Strathclyde. If St Patrick was also a native of Strathclyde, his words in this letter are easily explained: "To you who do such things I

cannot give the title of *fellow-citizens of mine or of the holy Romans*, but rather of fellow-citizens of demons."

†Adamnan's *Life of St Columba* has been often published. Dr Reeves prepared a very good edition for the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society in 1857. The *Life of St Columba* is, perhaps, the most perfect part of Montalembert's *Monks of the West*.



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relative. His principal monastery was in the little island of Hy. But his zeal was not confined within the cloister, nor to the Christian nation of the Scots. As St Mungo was at that very time evangelizing the Britons of Strathclyde and the Southern Picts, St Columba turned his steps to the north and north-east—Aberdeen, Banff, Inverness, Ross and the Orkneys; and the faith was spread throughout the whole of this region, either by the saint himself or his disciples. He died in Hy—called after him Hycolumcille—at the age of seventy-seven in the year 597, the very year that St Augustine landed in Kent for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.

Adamnan relates an incident of the youth of St Columba which gives us a picture of the worship in which he was brought up. “When the venerable man was still a youth in Ireland, with St Findbar the bishop, learning the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures, on a certain solemnity there happened to be no wine for the sacrificial mystery. When the youth noticed the ministers of the altar lamenting to one another about the want, he took a cruet and went to the fountain, as if to draw water as a deacon for the ministry of the Holy Eucharist; for at that time he ministered in deacon’s orders. Having drawn the water he blessed it, calling on the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who in Cana of Galilee changed water into wine; and by His Divine operation the inferior nature of water was now changed into the better nature of wine by the hands of this venerable man. Returning then from the fountain and entering the church, he placed the vessel containing this liquor near the altar, and said to the ministers: ‘You have now wine which the LORD JESUS has sent you for the performance of His mysteries.’” This miracle is supposed to have taken place about the year 542, when the saint was about twenty years old.

In this one anecdote a whole system of religious faith, discipline and worship is revealed. We have the various orders of bishop, deacon, and other ministers, and of course that of priesthood is implied. There is an altar; there is a celebration to be performed which is called not merely “the ministry of the Eucharist,” but “the sacrificial mystery.” Though nothing is here said of the Real Presence or of Transubstantiation, yet every candid Protestant will admit that men who could believe in the change of water into wine, not only by JESUS CHRIST Himself, but by His servants at the invocation of His name, would not have much difficulty in believing the change of the substance of bread and wine into our LORD’S Flesh and Blood. Now no species of miracle is of more frequent occurrence in the lives of Welsh and Irish saints. Dr Reeves refers to examples in the lives of St David, St Fursa, St Aidus, St Finnian, St Kieran, St Mochoemhog, St Gildas, St Sizinus, St Hymelinus, St Kiaran. I am not bringing these miracles as a proof of the Real Presence, nor even of the faith of the Welsh and Irish in the Blessed Sacrament. But they may fairly be adduced as evidence of a state of mind, either arising from an habitual sense of God’s omnipotence engendered by their belief in transubstantiation, or at least as a proof that such a doctrine could have met with little resistance on account of its intrinsic difficulties, if for other reasons it was proposed for acceptance.\*

That it was thus proposed cannot be absolutely proved from the life of St Columba, which does not treat of matters of doctrine, but it is expressed sufficiently and presupposed throughout, as I will show presently. I may,

\*In the Gotho-Gallic Missal of the sixth century, published by Mabillon, when the changing of water into wine is commemorated on the feast of the Epiphany, the people are taught to pray that “He, who

then changed water into wine, may now change the wine of the oblations into His own Blood.” (*De Liturg. Gal.*, I, i.)

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however, here give one document belonging to the Irish Church to show in what doctrines and practices St Columba had been brought up. One of his contemporaries was another Columba, more commonly called Columbanus, who left Ireland and passed to the Continent and became the founder of Anegray, Luxeuil and Fontenay in Burgundy. The *Regula Cœnobialis* of St Columbanus has been preserved. The fifteenth chapter is as follows: "Whoever loses the Sacrifice and knows not where it is, let him do penance for a year." For negligence in renewing the sacred Host various penances are imposed according to the degree of neglect. The sacred species, if entirely corrupted, is to be burnt, and the ashes are to be placed in the earth near the altar. If anyone fell into the water when carrying the Blessed Sacrament, as from a boat, bridge, or horse, he was to drink the water from the chrismal or pyx and to consume the particle. If this was a mere accident, one day's penance was prescribed; but if in wading through a river he had not taken care sufficient, then he was to do forty days' penance.\*

These prescriptions were made for the clergy travelling as missionaries on foot or on horseback in the rugged passes of the Vosges, and they reveal to us what were the precautions adopted, or the penance to be done for neglect of caution, by the monks who travelled in the wilds of Drumalban, or who rowed their osier boats in the lochs and rivers of the Highlands. They carried with them the Holy Eucharist, already consecrated, and (as it seems evident from the above rules) only under the species of bread. They were to take more precautions with regard to it than of their own limbs and life. To have been upset in a boat in passing down the rapids, or for a horse to have slipped with his rider into the river in passing over the trunks of trees laid across a stream, was not considered penance enough for the sufferer. He is not blamed for not taking sufficient care of his own neck, but "because he did not consider the danger to which he exposed the consecrated Host," the Sacrificium or Victim confided to his custody. Even if he is conscious of no fault, he must perform a rigid fast for one day as an act of humiliation and reparation. But if he has been foolhardy or too attentive to himself, when in danger, to think of taking his pyx from his bosom and lifting it high above his head as he waded through the torrent, a fast of a whole Lent must expiate the sin; while to have lost the sacred Particle will involve a year's penance and a year's absence from the altar.

All this, without asserting our LORD's Presence in so many express words, most unmistakably implies it. And it is also evident that that Presence was independent of the act of communion or the faith of the recipient. It was the result of consecration. On this point there is abundant evidence in the life of St Columba, as the following passages will show. Adamnan relates that when the saint was at Trevet (near Skreen, in County Meath) he went to a small monastery on a Sunday. "There he heard a certain priest consecrating the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist, whom the brethren had chosen to perform the solemnities of Mass because they esteemed him a very religious man." St Columba during the Mass exclaimed: "Clean and unclean are now mixed together: that is, the clean mysteries of the sacred oblation are ministered by an impure man." The priest, says Adamnan, confessed his sin thus supernaturally detected, as well as his hypocrisy.

The same truth of the effect of consecration is taught in a more pleasing

\*[Seebass in *Z. f. KG.*, xvii. 231 Many of the monastic rules ascribed to early Irish Saints have recently

been edited and translated in the Irish periodical *Eriu*. See Gougau in *Revue Bénédictine*, 1908.]



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anecdote, also related by Adamnan. "A stranger from Munster, named Cronan, came to the saint. Out of humility he concealed himself as much as he could, that no one should know that he was a bishop. But the fact could not be hidden from the saint. For on a Sunday, having been invited by Columba to consecrate as usual the Body of CHRIST (*Christi corpus ex more conficere*), he calls the saint to him, in order that together as two presbyters (*presbyteri*) they might break the LORD's Bread. The saint therefore going up to the altar, suddenly looking into his face, thus addresses him: "May CHRIST bless thee, brother; do you alone break this bread after the episcopal rite. Now we know that you are a bishop. Why have you endeavoured till now to conceal yourself, that the veneration which is due to you might not be paid by us?"

To understand this anecdote it must be remembered that St Columba was not himself a bishop. Bishops sometimes lived in monastic obedience subject to an abbot, but their episcopal character was never lost sight of, and at the altar they were treated with special reverence. In some countries at that time a bishop used to consecrate the Blessed Sacrament surrounded by his clergy, who were co-celebrants, as now in the Mass of ordination. But this discipline was never adopted in the British, Irish or English Church; at least I am not aware of an instance of it. But it appears to have been the custom in Ireland, that when a simple priest celebrated Mass in the presence of his abbot, he should invite him at the time of communion to come and break from the consecrated Host a particle with which to communicate himself. If a bishop celebrated, this honour was not paid to the abbot. The bishop consecrated and communicated alone, and then administered communion to the rest.\*

\*[This also may be a convenient place for calling attention to a remarkable liturgical monument, nothing less than the earliest known Eucharistic hymn. It is headed, "a hymn when the priests communicate," and begins, *Sancti venite, Christi Corpus sumite*, etc. This testimony to the Faith of the early Church is of Irish origin, and we possess in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* the actual copy made for the monks of Bangor (*Ben Chor*) before the year 690. How much older the hymn may be it is impossible to say.

The following note is taken from Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, revised edition, 1907: "This is in the Henry Bradshaw Society's edition of the *Bangor Antiphonary* (pt 1 facsimile f. 106, pt p. 11, 10); beginning, 'Sancti venite, CHRISTI Corpus sumite.' Canon Warren, in his notes at pp. 44, 45, referring to the fact that in the last stanza the MS. reads, 'Alpha et Omega,' says, 'It is very likely that these symbols were stamped upon the Eucharistic wafer bread.'

"There is a curious story told in the *Leabhar Breac*, or Speckled Book—a MS. of the fourteenth century in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy at Dublin—in its notes on the hymn of St Sechnall, which begins, 'Audite omnes,' and which, it says, 'was the first hymn that was made in Ireland.' St Sechnall composed this hymn in honour of St Patrick to make peace with him. The reason, says the Speckled Book, was 'because of the annoyance Sechnall gave Patrick in saying, 'A good man were Patrick were it not for one thing, viz., the small extent to which he preaches charity.' When Patrick heard it, he went to Sechnall in great anger. Sechnall had just finished Mass, except going to CHRIST's body, when it was told him that Patrick was coming to the place in great anger against Sechnall. The latter thereupon left the oblation on the altar and bowed down to Patrick. . . . So they made peace then, Patrick and

Sechnall. And whilst they were going round the cemetery, they heard a choir of angels singing around the oblation in the Church; and what they sang was the hymn beginning 'Sancti venite, CHRISTI Corpus,' etc. Hence this hymn is sung in Ireland when one goes to the body of Christ, from that time onward.' (See the *Irish Liber Hymnorum*, vol. II, p. 5.)"

## HYMNUS QUANDO COMMUNICANT SACERDOTES.

SANCTI venite,  
CHRISTI Corpus sumite,  
Sanctum bibentes  
Quo redempti sanguinem.

Salvati CHRISTI  
Corpore et sanguine,  
A quo refecti,  
Laudes dicamus DEO.

Hoc Sacramento  
Corporis et sanguinis  
Omnes exciti  
Ab inferni faucibus.

Dator Salutis  
CHRISTUS, Filius DEI,  
Mundum salvavit,  
Per crucem et sanguinem.

Pro universis  
Immolatus DOMINUS  
Ipse Sacerdos  
Existit et Hostia.

Lege preceptum  
Immolari hostiam,  
Qua adumbrantur  
Divina mysteria.

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Adamnan relates a miracle which shows St Columba not as an assistant or communicant merely, but as a celebrant. Some abbots visit him, "and request that in their presence he will celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist. On the Sunday, according to custom, he enters the church after the reading of the Gospel; then, while the solemnities of Mass are being celebrated, St Brendan sees a fiery globe burning as it were from the head of St Columba, as he stood before the altar and consecrated the sacred oblation, and this continued to burn till the sacred mysteries were ended." \*

It does not appear from this Life whether there was more than one altar in the church; but as we know that when the Irish monks, who had been brought up under the Columbian discipline, carried the faith into Northumbria in the next century, they constructed many altars in the churches, it is probable that this may have been the case in St Columba's own monastic churches. We know at least from one event recorded that there were side chapels or oratories.

Nor can we gather from this Life what was the frequency of celebration; though it would seem to have been confined to Sundays and festivals, unless when some special reason, as the news of a death, caused an extraordinary Mass to be offered. "One day," says Adamnan, "St Columba bade a monk quickly prepare for the celebration of the Eucharist; for to-day, he added, is the birthday of holy Brendan. The monk replied: 'Why do you order the solemnities of the Mass to be prepared to-day, since no news has come from Ireland of the death of that holy man?' St Columba answered that he had seen his soul during the past night carried by the angels to heaven." At another time, "just as the monks were putting on their shoes to go out to their daily tasks, Columba ordered a holiday to be kept, and he said that he would say Mass. Now, when in the chanting of the service that prayer was being sung in which the name of St Martin is commemorated, suddenly the saint said to the singers who were coming to the mention of that name: 'To-day you must sing for Bishop Colman.'"

Lucis indultor  
Et salvator omnium,  
Præclaram sanctis  
Largitus est gratiam.  
Accedant omnes  
Pura mente creduli,  
Sumant æternam  
Salutis custodiam.  
Sanctorum custos,  
Rector quoque DOMINUS,  
Vitæ perennis  
Largitor credentibus.  
Cœlestem panem  
Dat esurientibus,  
De fonte vivo  
Præbet sitientibus.  
Alpha et Omega,  
Ipse CHRISTUS DOMINUS  
Venit, venturus  
Judicare homines.

By mystic rite of flesh and blood as well  
All have been rescued from the jaws of hell.  
Salvation's Giver, CHRIST, the only Son,  
By His dear Cross and Blood the world hath won.  
Offered was He, for greatest and for least,  
Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest.  
Victims were offered by the law of old  
Which in a type this heav'nly mystery told.  
He, LORD of light and SAVIOUR of our race,  
Hath given to His Saints a wondrous grace.  
Approach ye then with faithful hearts sincere  
And take the safeguard of salvation here.  
He, that His saints in this world rules and shields,  
To all believers life eternal yields.  
He feeds the hungry with the bread of heaven,  
And living streams to those who thirst are given.  
Alpha and Omega, to whom shall bow  
All nations at the Doom, is with us now.

Amen.

The following is Dr Neale's translation of Sechnall's hymn:

## DURING THE COMMUNION

**D**RAW nigh and take the Body of the LORD  
And drink the holy Blood for you outpoured.  
By that pure Body and that holy Blood  
Saved and refreshed we offer thanks to God.

*Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 269.]

\*It is an incidental proof of identity of faith that an exactly similar fact is recorded of St Martin in Gaul.



# THE PICTS AND THE SCOTS

This is the only reference to the nature of the liturgy, and it is somewhat obscure. Dr Reeves seeks to explain it by means of the Gallican liturgy. He shows that in a list of names recited from the diptychs after the offertory in the Church of Arles, St Martin's was the last mentioned. He thinks, therefore, that the Irish Church had borrowed this liturgy, and that at this point of the Mass St Columba bade the chanters add the name of St Colman. But the recent publication of the *Canon of the Stowe Missal*,\* an Irish MS. belonging to the seventh century, suggests to me another interpretation. In the Memento for the Dead, after the commemoration of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and hermits, comes the list of holy bishops. Among these the very first was St Martin. After him came Gregory, Maximus, Felix, Patrick, etc. This was in all probability the liturgy used in St Columba's churches; and if so, Adamnan's allusion would mean that when the singers or reciters came to the order of bishops (i.e., came to St Martin's name), Columba informed them of the death of his friend, and of his rank and name, and that he should be therefore commemorated at the end of the series.†

There is one fragment of Scoto-Celtic liturgy, of which the date is considered to be not much later than A.D. 800. It is a visitation of the sick, or at least that part of it which belongs to Holy Communion. It begins with the following prayer said by the priest:

"Creator of all natures and Father of all in heaven and on earth, receive from Thy throne in the inaccessible light the pious prayers of Thy trembling people, and though Thou art surrounded by the unceasing praises of the cherubim and seraphim, yet deign to listen to the supplications of our unwavering hope." The Pater Noster was then said or chanted, and the priest continued: "Deliver us, O LORD, from evil; O LORD JESUS CHRIST, keep us always in every good work. O GOD, Fount and Author of all good, empty our souls of their vices, and fill them with virtue, through Thee, O JESUS CHRIST, who," etc.

Rubric in Gaelic: "Hisund dubar sacorfaice dau," i.e., "Here give the sacrifice to him." The words of administration were these: "Corpus cum san-

\*[Of late years the Stowe Missal, after being edited by Dr Warren in his *Liturgy of the Celtic Church* and more completely by Dr McCarthy in the *Transactions* of the Royal Irish Academy, has been published in facsimile by the Henry Bradshaw Society. It has also been made the object of a large number of learned papers, some of the most valuable of which, by Mr Edmund Bishop, have appeared in the *Journal of Theological Studies*.]

† On the same supposition that the Stowe Missal represents, with few variations, the use of St Columba's monks, I may here add a few details from this most precious and unique relic. In the prayer beginning *Te igitur*, at the commencement of the canon, there was a commemoration of the Roman Pontiff—"una cum N. papa nostro, episcopo sedis apostolicæ." Before the *Communicantes* there is another evidence of Catholic communion. The celebrant prays "pro domino papa, episcopo, et omnibus episcopis et presbyteris et omni ecclesiastico ordine." The next words, "pro imperio Romano et omnibus regibus Christianis," were probably added in the ninth century, when the Roman Empire had been re-established in Charlemagne. In the same prayer the dead are thus mentioned:—"pro fratribus quos de caliginosis mundi hujus tenebris DOMINUS arcessere dignatus est, uti eos in æterna summæ lucis quiete pietas divina suscipiat."

In the *Communicantes* (which is in the seventh-century hand) the same apostles and martyrs are commemorated as in the Sarum and in the ancient and modern Roman uses. The first words, however, differ, and our Lady and St Peter are specially honoured:—"Communicantes et memoriam venerantes imprimis gloriosæ semper virginis Mariæ, genetricis DEI et DOMINI nostri JESU CHRISTI, sed et beatorum apostolorum ac martyrum tuorum Petri, Pauli, Andreæ, Jacobi," etc.

After the words, "Per quem . . . sæcula sæculorum, Amen," instead of going on at once to the Pater Noster, this Missal has, in the seventh-century hand, the following words: "Let Thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee. They knew the LORD, Alleluia, in the breaking of bread, Alleluia. The bread which we break is the Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Alleluia. The chalice which we bless, Alleluia, is the blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Alleluia, for the remission of our sins, Alleluia." Then, in the ninth-century hand, it continues: "We believe, O LORD, we believe, that in this breaking of (Thy) Body and pouring out of (Thy) Blood we are redeemed, and we trust by the reception of this sacrament to be protected, that what here we possess in hope, we may enjoy for ever in heaven in its true fruits."

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guine DOMINI nostri JESU CHRISTI sanitas sit tibi in vitam perpetuam et salutem," i.e., "The Body with the Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be health to thee to life eternal and to salvation." The priest then recited with the clerks:

"V. Fed on the Body and Blood of CHRIST, let us ever say to Thee, O LORD, Alleluia, Alleluia.

"R. He hath filled the empty soul and satisfied the hungry soul with good things, Alleluia, Alleluia.

"V. Let them sacrifice the sacrifice of praise, and exult for ever, Alleluia, Alleluia.

"R. I will receive the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD, Alleluia, Alleluia.

"V. Fed on the Body, etc. (as above).

"V. Laudate DOMINUM, etc. (Ps. cxvi).

"R. Quoniam, etc.

"V. Gloria Patri, etc.

"R. Fed on the Body, etc.

"V. Sicut erat, etc.

"R. Fed on the Body, etc.

"V. Sacrifice the sacrifice of justice and hope in the LORD.

"Let us pray.

"We give thanks to Thee, O LORD, through whom we have celebrated these holy mysteries, and of Thee we ask the gifts of holiness; have mercy on us, O LORD SAVIOUR of the world, who reignest for ever and ever."\*

With regard to this remnant of Celtic Scotland it must be remarked that it is in Latin, but in Gaelic characters. The whole document is written on a leaf in the middle of a copy of the Gospels, or rather of fragments of them. As the Gospels were frequently carried to the sick to be read to them or over them, it was found convenient to have the form for the administration of communion in the same book. But as the Mass is not given, it is evident that the Blessed Sacrament was not consecrated in the sick man's chamber. It is very improbable that it was carried from the church in both species, and the form, "Corpus cum Sanguine," i.e., the Body with the Blood, testifies to the faith that both are present under one species.†

In this volume are some very rude and quaint illuminations, or rather rough pen-and-ink sketches which are only slightly coloured with pale yellow and brownish-red paint. Some of the figures are apparently intended to represent priests; and as Professor Paley, the writer of the article in *The Home and Foreign Review*, remarks, "Considerable interest must attach to a representation, however rude, of the vestments worn by a Gaelic priest in the ninth century. Two figures in the frontispiece seem to be attired in a chasuble, the ends of which are folded over the knees in a circular form. Over the breast is a rather large square apparel, or *rationale*, suspended from the neck by three strings. The collar, or rather the neck folds, seem to be most ample, and quite unlike any fashion that we are acquainted with in the Middle Ages."

To return now to the life of St Columba, I will mention one other point in which it confirms what has been already said of the unity of faith and

\*From the *Book of Deer* (a town in Aberdeenshire). An account is given of this MS. in the *Home and Foreign Review*, October, 1862. See also Haddan and Stubbs, II, 275, and Warren's *Liturgy of the Celtic Church*, p. 164.

†Two very similar liturgical forms exist in the books of Mulling and of Dimma, both Irish. They also are

copies of the Gospels, with the form for communion copied into them. In the book of Mulling, the form of administering is the same as in that of the book of Deer, except that the word *salutem* is omitted. The book of Dimma has "Corpus et Sanguis DOMINI nostri JESU CHRISTI, Filii DEI vivi, conservat animam tuam in vitam perpetuam."



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devotion in the Celtic, Saxon and Continental churches: viz., in the Invocation of Saints. Adamnan relates how he himself, wishing to obtain a favourable wind for the transport of some trees, for the rebuilding of the monastery, “placed upon the altar the vestments and books of the blessed man [i.e., of St Columba] with psalms and fasting and the invocation of his name.” And in recording instances of graces obtained by Columba’s intercession, he gives the very words with which he had adjured his heavenly patron. Being detained by contrary winds, he cried out: “Is then, O Saint, this delay pleasing to you? Hitherto we have trusted that we should receive through you, from God’s mercy, some consolation and assistance in our labours, esteeming that you have great interest with God.” Immediately, says Adamnan, the wind changed, and that gentle accusation of the saint greatly helped us.\*

Another time, wishing to celebrate St Columba’s feast at Iona and being at a considerable distance on the vigil, and the wind contrary, Adamnan prayed as follows: “Must we then, O Saint, keep your feast to-morrow among the people and not in your own church? It is an easy thing for you to obtain from God that



THE ARDAGH CHALICE

at the beginning of so great a day the wind should change, that we may celebrate the solemnity of the Mass of thy festival in thy church.” On this occasion also the prayer was heard. They reached Iona the next day, after tierce (i.e., between nine and twelve o’clock), and having washed their hands and feet, entering the church with the brethren, at noon they celebrated together the solemn Mass.

There is nothing known to us regarding the frequency of communion in the Scottish or Pictish churches, either in monasteries or among the laity. One incident preserved by Adamnan shows us the working of the penitential system. An Irishman named Libranus had slain a man and afterwards violated a solemn oath. He came over to Iona and made a full confession to St Columba, and swore he was willing to fulfil any penance. The saint required him to live in exile but in monastic service for seven years, and at the end of his penance to return to him during Lent, that he might receive Communion at Easter.

If Holy Communion was the reward of the sincere penitent, it was also the strength of the patriots ready to die in defence of their homes and altars.

\*[Besides Dr Reeves’ now somewhat scarce volume, studied in the excellent edition by Dr Fowler and in Adamnan’s *Life of St Columba* may be conveniently the most useful translation by Mr W. Huyshe.]

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One little glimpse of Scotland which has been preserved in the Irish Annals shows the devotion which was retained towards St Columba long after his death, and at the same time reveals the practice of communion immediately before battle. In the year 909, says the Annals, "the men of Fortrenn [Scotch] and the Lochlanns [i.e., Norwegians] fought a battle. Vigorously indeed did the men of Alban fight this battle, for Columcille was assisting them, for they prayed to him fervently, because he was their apostle, and it was through him they had received the faith. On a former occasion, when Imhar Conung was a young man, he came to plunder Alban with three large battalions. What the men of Alban, both laity and clergy, did, was to remain until morning fasting and praying to God and to Columcille, and they cried aloud to the Lord and gave many alms of food and clothes to the churches and to the poor, and to take the Body of the Lord from the hands of the priests, and to promise to do every good as their clergy would order them. And they would have as their standard at the head of every battle the crosier of Columcille, for which reason it is called Cathhuaidh [i.e., battle-victory] from that time forth."\*

Equally beautiful with this story of brave men strengthened by the Body of JESUS CHRIST to fight against the heathen, is another which shows us holy men awaiting their death by the same cruel heathen at the foot of the altar. The Irish Annals write at the date A.D. 825, "Martyrium Blaithmaci filii Flainn a gentilibus in Hy Coluimcille." Such short entries as this constitute in most cases all that we know of the men of those days, their deeds and sufferings. But in this case it is otherwise. The word Blaithmac means "Son of the Flower," and the martyr is sometimes called Florigenius or Florus, in English, Florence. The history of his martyrdom has been written by Walafrid Strabo. Walafrid's monastery, Reichenau or Augia Dives (Rich Meadow), was of Irish foundation. It was on an island in the Lake of Constance. Of this Walafrid was abbot from 842-849, and he himself mentions how many Irish were travelling at the beginning of the ninth century, owing to the incursions of the Danes, and how some had come to Reichenau. It was from these that Walafrid learned the details of the recent martyrdom of Blaithmac. He says that Blaithmac was of royal blood, and even heir to his father, an Irish king, but he became a monk; and at last, to escape the importunities of his father and the nobles, fled to Iona, where he was made president or prior. He had sought Iona in hopes of martyrdom, for the Danes had already devastated it in 802. Knowing supernaturally of their return and of his own death, he counselled such of the monks as did not feel a desire or strength for the coming conflict to save themselves by flight. Some did so, others remained with him and shared his fate. He had hidden the shrine of St Columba in the earth, and refused to make known to the plunderers where it was concealed. He and his companions were slain while he was in the act of saying Mass. "The holy doctor," says Walafrid, "was celebrating the holy rites of Mass, and stood himself as a spotless victim before the sacred altar, to be immolated to God by the cruel sword of the heathen; his monks lay prostrate around, with tears and prayers commending their souls to God."†

Nor was this a solitary example. On the contrary, all accounts agree in representing the Danes, wherever they went, in England, Scotland or Ireland, as pouring out their heathen fury on the defenceless clergy. And these seem generally to have prepared for martyrdom by Holy Mass and communion, or

\*Skene, *Chronicles of Picts and Scots*, p. 405. As the Imhar Conung, i.e., Ivor the King, was slain in 904, and the event here related happened when he was a young man, it

must have occurred in the latter half of the ninth century.

†*Bib. Mag. Lugd.* tom. xv, p. 209, and Reeves, Note to Adamnan, preface, p. xxii and p. 389.



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to have found a last consolation in breathing out their souls before the altars at which they had so often prayed. The anonymous author of the history of the translation of St Cuthbert's body, writing of the very period of the martyrdom of Blaithmac, and the north of Britain, says: "Then might be seen noble and illustrious priests butchered around the very altars on which they had consecrated the holy mysteries of the Body and Blood of the LORD."\*

[The great honour paid to the Blessed Sacrament in the early Irish Church is attested in many ways by documents which have only in recent times been made accessible to scholars. For example, in the "Rule" attributed to Cormac, and in any case to be assigned to the period in which he lived, the end of the ninth century, we find such a verse as the following: "A protection of the soul, an approach to heaven, a wonderful power, a fostering purity is the food which is after extinction of desire, CHRIST'S Body with the Blood of Mary's Son" (*Eriu*, Vol. II, p. 66). Again the Rule of Ailbe of Emly preserves what appears to be an extremely early example of extra-liturgical cultus of the Blessed Sacrament, though the vagueness of the language and the difficulty of interpretation, which is confessedly presented by old Irish texts in verse, must prevent us from drawing any inference of too positive a character. The context seems clearly to describe the getting up of the religious community in the morning to set about the labours of the day.

"*Hymnum dicat* to be sung at the loud striking of the bell for the canonical hours, that the brothers may wash their hands clean, that they may dress.

"A genuflexion thrice, earnestly, after going in past the altar-rail, without levity and without excitement, going into the presence of the King of the angels" (*Eriu*, Vol. III, 1907, p. 101).

In its present form the Rule cannot be assigned to a much earlier date than the eighth century, but the substance of the prescriptions there laid down may belong to the time of St Ailbe, i.e., about the year 540.†

Very striking also is the faith manifested in an Irish tractate in the Stowe Missal, which, though later in date than the original text, is probably older than the tenth century and may be presumed to be of purely Irish origin. The following may serve as a specimen:

"Now another portion of that pledge which was left with the Church to comfort her is the Body of CHRIST and His Blood which are offered on the altar of the Christians.

"The Body which was born of Mary the Virgin, without the loss of her virginity, without the opening of her womb, without the presence of man; and which was hanged by the disbelieving Jews out of spite and envy; and which after a three days' space arose from death; and which sits on the right hand of GOD the Father in heaven, in glory and majesty, before the angels of heaven: it is of that Body, as it is in the great glory, that the righteous partake from the Table of GOD, i.e., the holy altar. For that Body is the believers' rich provision for the way, as they journey on the path of pilgrimage and penitence in the world here below unto the heavenly fatherland. It is the seed of the resurrection unto life everlasting, to the righteous. On the other hand, it is the origin and cause of stumbling to the impious, who do not believe it; and to the carnal, who though they believe, do not discern (distinguish) it."‡]

\* Giles' Bede, vol. vi, p. 383.

† See Gougaud in the *Revue Bénédictine*, April, 1908, pp. 177-178.

‡ See also the translation of the whole tractate by Duncan Macgregor in the *Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society*, 1898, pp. 293-341.

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## CHAPTER III. THE ANGLO-SAXON CONVERSION

THESE is an event in the earthly life of our Divine Redeemer, in which we may see a type of God's providence over His Church. The birth of the Son of God was surrounded by prodigies. The angels inviting the shepherds to His crib, and the star guiding the magians with their gifts, might appear to betoken a life to be passed amidst the love and adoration of men. But no sooner had these things taken place than terror seemed to seize on the heavenly host, and an angel was sent on a swift message to Joseph: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there till I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." What is the meaning, ask the holy doctors,\* of this apparent weakness? They reply that it is the first lesson of "The Economy"—that it is a sign that God has become man in very truth, and not a phantom, and is subject to the conditions of human life. God will now show His power and providence, not by destroying kings, as Pharaoh and Sennacherib, but by baffling them, by seeming to let them triumph, and yet working out His own ends by their means. And by the life of His Incarnate Son, God will teach His servants what they are to expect in every age. "You see at His birth," says St Chrysostom, "first a tyrant raging, then flight ensuing, and departure beyond the border; and for no crime His Mother is exiled into the land of the barbarians. And this is done that thou, hearing these things—shouldst thou have been appointed to any spiritual charge and then see thyself suffering incurable ills and enduring countless dangers—shouldst not be greatly troubled, nor say: 'What can this be? Surely I ought to be crowned and celebrated for fulfilling the LORD's commandment?'"

The lessons of the Flight—that kings seem to do all things at their will, and are nevertheless controlled by God's hand—that God's designs appear to be frustrated, and His work overthrown, just when He is carrying out some deep plan of His wisdom and love—that God's friends may fly before the face of His enemies, and yet be in His company—that they appear to be saving or protecting Him, while He all the time is shielding them—that the times are placed by God in His own power, and that we must wait with uncertainty, but with patient trust, till His angels summon us—these lessons must be well pondered by us if we would not take scandal from the history of the Most Holy Eucharist. They are exemplified in every age, and certainly not least in that on which we are now entering. The reader of Bede's history of the early days of the Anglo-Saxon Church will be charmed by many a noble or pathetic tale; but when he ponders on the whole story of England's second conversion, he will be lost in wonder at the strange and secret ways of God's providence. All seems to depend on kings and rulers. When they protect religion, it flourishes; when they withdraw their protection, it fails. What triumphs for the Church under good kings, the Ethelberts, Edwins, Oswalds, Oswins, Sigeberts, and so many more! But what reverses under the Eadbalds, Cadwallons, Pendas, and the rest! And what sudden misfortunes come to disappoint the brightest and best-founded hopes! What irregularity in the progress of the faith! How it advances and retires, and follows no apparent plan and seems the sport of circumstances! Yet, all the time, faith in God's providence, and the analogy of our LORD's own life, and the inspired record of the Acts of the Apostles, assure us that, though Herod and

\* St John Chrysost. *Hom. 8 in Mat.*; St Peter Chrysologus, *Serm. 151*, "De fuga Christi."



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Pontius Pilate combine their powers, it is only “to do what God’s hand and God’s counsel decreed to be done.”

The history of the conversion of the heathen races who had overrun Christian Britain is not to be written here; nor is it any part of the plan of this work to sketch even an outline of the course of religion in general. Nothing will be related but what bears immediately or proximately on the Holy Eucharist; and I must suppose my reader’s acquaintance with the main facts of English history, whether civil or ecclesiastical. In the present chapter, following the narrative of Bede,\* I will set down the principal matters at least, which regard the gradual erection of churches and altars for the celebration of the Sacred Rite, from the landing of St Augustine to the final closing of heathen temples and the cessation of all public idolatry.

When St Augustine landed in Kent, there was a Frankish bishop named Liudhard attached to the court of Ethelbert’s Christian queen, Bertha, the daughter of King Charibert of Paris. He appears to have held in the palace of the heathen king much the same position as the bishop-chaplain of Henrietta Maria in the court of Charles I. He was allowed to celebrate the holy rites in the church assigned to him—an old British church dedicated to St Martin—but it seems he was not permitted to make converts. The Roman missionaries, however, obtained permission, not only to say Mass (*missas facere*), but also to preach, baptize, and propagate the faith, which they did most successfully. In the very first year the king, whose heart had been prepared by the prayers and example of his saintly wife, set the example of conversion to his subjects. And here let me remark that in saying that the success of the Gospel among the Anglo-Saxons depended in great measure on the encouragement or opposition of kings, I am not underrating its power; for surely to convert kings and make so many of them zealous apostles of the faith was a triumph of the Gospel no less wonderful than to have converted a bigoted Pharisee and made him “a chosen vessel to carry the name of CHRIST before kings and peoples.” What Bede says of Ethelbert is true of St Edwin, St Oswald, and the other saintly kings: “The king so far encouraged his people’s conversion, as that he compelled none to embrace Christianity, but only showed more affection to the believers, as his fellow-citizens in the heavenly kingdom.”† The conversions, therefore, were due, not to fear or interest, but to the grace of God, and the means employed were perfectly legitimate.

We learn from a letter of St Gregory that on the first Christmas Day as many as ten thousand Kentish men were baptized. Some of the old British churches were restored for Christian worship, and new churches were built.

The grievous disappointment which St Augustine experienced from the refusal of the British bishops to co-operate with him in preaching the Gospel was somewhat compensated the year after by the conversion of Sabert, king of the East Saxons, and the erection of a church dedicated to St Paul in London. St Augustine also saw a bishopric established at Rochester, and a church built in honour of St Andrew. But as the glories of our LORD’s birth had been quickly followed by the flight into Egypt, so were the first triumphs of grace in England followed by reverses and humiliations.

Bede gives us a glimpse of St Mellitus, the first Bishop of London, offering

\*I cannot too warmly urge the reading of Bede’s History in his own words. Canon Bright has given an admirable summing-up of Bede’s merits in his *Chapters of Early English Church History*, pp. 326-329, and has interpreted and elucidated Bede’s narrative

in a masterly and most impartial manner. [All references to the *History* of Bede ought of course now to be made to the text of C. Plummer. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1896. 2 vols.]

† Bede, 1, 26.

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Mass in the church of St Paul's and distributing communion to the faithful,\* but it is only to show a sad contrast in the background of the picture. The three sons of Sabert had remained idolaters at their father's death in 616. They did not at first persecute the missionaries, but, drawn by curiosity to the church, they fancied that a slight was put on them by the Italian bishop because he would not admit them to the privileges of Christians, which they neither cared for nor understood. "Why do you not give us also that white bread which you used to give to our father Saba, and which you still give to the people in the church?" Then, because St Mellitus refused to be guilty of such a sacrilege, they banished him from their kingdom.

London was even then a great commercial city, "the mart of many nations, who thronged to it by sea and land," says Bede. For twelve years the holy sacrifice was offered in its cathedral, many were baptized, many communicated. St Gregory had marked it out as the metropolitan church of the South of England. But from the expulsion of Mellitus the church remained desolate and profaned for seven-and-thirty years. Many of the Christians who had "once been illuminated, had tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," fell away altogether from the faith. "The people," says Bede, "having been once turned to wickedness, even when the authors of it were destroyed, would not be corrected, nor return to the unity of faith and charity which is in CHRIST."† The impious princes who were the first to insult the Blessed Sacrament in England were soon slain in battle. The king of Kent, Eadbald, the son of Ethelbert, recalled Mellitus, and would have sent him back to his diocese, but "the Londoners would not receive him, choosing rather to be under their idolatrous priests, nor did Eadbald's power enable him to reinstate Mellitus against the will and in spite of the refusal of the pagans."‡ A new generation grew up, and the church of St Paul's was doubtless pointed out to them with scorn by some—we should hope with remorse and regret by others—as the place where once the Christian sacrifice had been offered. We are reminded of the Gospel history when Jesus had driven out the evil spirits from the man, called Legion, and "all the multitude of the country besought Jesus to depart from them; and He going up into the ship returned back again."

St Augustine's own churches at Canterbury were spared this profanation. Bede has told us how St Laurence, St Augustine's successor, was preparing to abandon his work on account of the unworthy conduct of Eadbald, the son and successor of Ethelbert, and how the night before his departure he kept a tearful vigil in the church of SS. Peter and Paul:

On his knees  
Meantime that aged priest was creeping slow  
From stone to stone, as when on battle-plain,  
The battle lost, some warrior wounded sore,  
By all forsaken, or some war-horse maimed  
Drags a blind bulk along the field in search  
Of thirst-assuaging spring. Glittered serene  
That light before the Sacrament of Love: §  
Thither he bent his way, and long time prayed.

Aubrey de Vere, *Legends of the Saxon Saints*.

St Peter appeared to him that night in vision, warned and scourged him. Eadbald was converted, and showed himself henceforth no unworthy son of Ethelbert.||

\* Bede, 11, 5: "Cum viderent pontificem, celebratis in ecclesia missarum solenniis, eucharistiam populo dare." † Bede, 11, 5. ‡ *Ib.* 11, 6.

§ [There is nothing, of course, in the text of Bede to justify this introduction of a sanctuary lamp. We have no clear reference to a light kept constantly burning

before the Blessed Sacrament before the twelfth or thirteenth century. Moreover, Bede expressly says that Laurence ordered a bed to be made up for him in the church, and that after many prayers he lay down there and fell asleep. The vision came to him in his sleep.] || Bede, 11, 6.



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In the North there was a similar vicissitude: a bright beginning, a terrible reverse, and a glorious restoration. In 627 the heathen priest Coifi profaned the temple in which he had served his gods, and became a convert to Christianity. For six years St Paulinus preached with great success, and baptized multitudes in the Bowent, the Swale and the Trent. King Edwin had been baptized in his royal city of York, in a little wooden chapel which was long carefully preserved within the stone cathedral afterwards erected.

But this picture is marred by a still darker shadow than that of London; for now we have Cadwallon the Briton, a nominally Christian king, in whom national hatred triumphed over any feeling of religion he may have had, joining the heathen Penda in an attack on the newly converted Edwin. And God, who had granted Edwin a victory over his enemies in 626, to secure his conversion from idolatry, now in 633 by defeat and death admits him to His heavenly kingdom. Paulinus, like Mellitus, saw all his work of love and patience overthrown. The Britons, says Bede, paid no regard to the Christianity of their Teuton invaders, and treated them as pagans. They and their heathen allies, after the death of Edwin, ravaged the country and spared neither helpless women nor innocent children.\* St Paulinus had been too busy travelling from place to place over a vast region, preaching, catechizing and baptizing, to build many churches. But "he had erected a basilica at Campodunum"† (perhaps Almondbury or Tanfield in Yorkshire), "where was then the royal villa, and this was burnt down by the pagans, by whom Edwin was slain." An altar, that was of stone, escaped destruction by the fire, and was still kept in Bede's time, i.e., a century later, in a monastery in the forest of Elmete,‡ probably on the site of the existing parish church of Leeds.

St Paulinus, on this overthrow of his work, retired to Kent, conducting with him Edwin's widow, Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, and, the see of Rochester being then vacant, Honorius, the Archbishop of Canterbury, committed it to his care. Two relics of St Paulinus's mission to Northumbria were long kept in Canterbury, "a large golden cross and a golden chalice, dedicated to the use of the altar," which had been presents of Edwin, and which St Paulinus carried with him in his flight.§ He left behind him, however, something far more precious, his deacon James, a man of God, who survived to a great old age, and never ceased to carry on the work of preaching and baptizing, though as a deacon he could not offer the Holy Sacrifice.

After the defeat of Edwin, the two great provinces of which Northumbria was composed, Deira and Bernicia, were divided between two kings, the former falling to Osric, a convert of St Paulinus, and the Northern province, Bernicia, to Eanfrid, who had also been baptized while living in exile among the Scots. Both these princes apostatized, in order, as they hoped, to secure the support of their heathen subjects; but both fell beneath the sword of Cadwallon in the first year of their reign—a year, says Bede, that was afterwards called "the hateful year," because of these apostasies and of the ravages of the British king.||

God had prepared for the rebuilding of the Church of Northumbria a man after His own heart—*vir Deo dilectus*, says Bede—and who must be loved as well as admired by every one who reads his history. This was the king St Oswald; and it was by his means that the Irish Church of Dalraida, which had already spread the faith northwards to Caithness and the Orkneys, was to find a new field of labour in South Britain, and from its new home in Lindisfarne

\* Bede, II, 20.    † *Ib.* II, 14.    ‡ *Ib.* II, 14.    § *Ib.* II, 20.    || *Ib.* III, 1.

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to send bishops not only throughout Northumbria, but to Lichfield and even to London.

St Oswald during his exile in Scotland had received the faith and the grace of baptism from the monks of St Columba. Far from imitating the miserable Eanfrid and seeking by apostasy to win earthly favour and strength, he gathered together "an army, small indeed in number, but strengthened with the faith of CHRIST." \* The night before the battle, in which he was to meet a much larger army of Britons under Cadwallon, at a place already by good omen called Heavenfield, near Hexham, St Columba appeared to him and promised him victory. † The victory was a glorious one for St Oswald, and happy in its results on the Church of Northumbria; but it is nevertheless sad to think that it was a victory of Christians over Christians, of men only recently converted from paganism over men whose fathers and forefathers had been Christians. Cadwallon had been so elated with his victory over Edwin, that he hoped to recover the ancient British territory and exterminate its invaders. We can but admire his bravery and his patriotism; but his mode of warfare had been cruel, and the policy of extermination, which the Britons preferred to that of conversion, had no blessing from God. The same St Columba who three centuries later assisted the Scotch to repel the heathen Norwegians, ‡ now assisted the pious Oswald and his faithful band of followers in their battle against the Christian but cruel Britons. They were defeated with great slaughter, and Cadwallon himself perished.

St Oswald's first care was to continue the work begun by St Paulinus. But he did not send to Canterbury for missionaries, nor could he of course look to the Britons in the West, whose fellow-countrymen he had just defeated. He naturally turned to the Church in which he had himself received baptism, and whose founder, St Columba, had encouraged him in vision. The abbots of Iona, though usually only presbyters themselves, had bishops in their community, and a monk named Cormac was consecrated and sent to the work of evangelizing the English, and when he returned disheartened St Aidan took his place. Though St Aidan so far clung to his early habits as to fix his dwelling in a remote and barren island, and he and his successors were monks as well as bishops, yet the Columban anomalous discipline of placing bishops under the jurisdiction of presbyters was never transferred to England, nor did the abbot of Iona claim any authority over the new colony.

Into the history of the work of St Aidan, and of Finan and Colman his successors, I need not enter. Bede says that when St Oswald erected his cross before the battle of Heavenfield there had been no church, no altar, no external sign whatever of the Christian faith, hitherto erected throughout all the nation of the Bernicians. § By the labours of St Aidan and the faithful priests whom he trained the faith was spread, monasteries were founded, churches were built in that province, which extended from the Tees to the Firth of Forth. "The religion which he taught," says Canon Bright, "was essentially identical with that which prevailed at Canterbury or Dunwich, where his name was held in honour" (by Archbishop Honorius and Bishop Felix). "Mass was celebrated at Lindisfarne on Sundays and holy-days, certainly with no splendour of visible surroundings, and probably with rites differing in some measure (not, of course, as to the essentials of the service) from those of the Gregorian Liturgy which Augustine had brought into Kent, and cognate to the Gallican use which Felix,

\* Bede, III, 1.

† He told this vision or dream himself to Seghine,

‡ See *antea*, ch. II, p. 19.

abbot of Iona, from whom Adamnan learned it. (*Vita Col.* I, 1).

§ Bede, III, 2.



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perhaps, had introduced into East Anglia; but the usual language about 'the mysteries of the sacred Eucharist' was as familiar to a disciple of Hy or of Lindisfarne as to the churchmen of Gaul or Italy."\*

In this passage reference is made to the see of Dunwich in East Anglia. This comprised Norfolk and Suffolk. Redwald, their king, had been baptized in Kent, probably in the time of Ethelbert. On returning home he had sought, with a policy common enough to kings, to unite two things incompatible, the worship of CHRIST and the worship of the devil. Bede says that in the same temple he constructed *altare ad sacrificium Christi et arulam ad victimas dæmoniorum*—an altar for the Christian sacrifice (or perhaps for a sacrifice to CHRIST), and another on which to offer victims to his demons.† Bede does not say whether he found a Christian priest willing to offer the holy Mass in this temple, and it seems more probable that he was contented with getting one of his heathen priests to imitate the Christian mysteries, offering sacrifice to CHRIST as to a new god received into the pagan Walhalla.

His son Earpwald, and Sigbert his stepson, were better advised; and Felix, a Burgundian bishop, succeeded in gaining the people to the faith, and establishing churches and even a seminary for priests. The conversion of the East Anglians was begun about A.D. 628.

The West Saxons were the next converted. Their conversion was due to St Birinus. He was sent to England by Pope Honorius in 634. Of the great devotion of this saintly missionary and bishop to the Blessed Sacrament an incidental proof has been recorded by William of Malmesbury. Pope Honorius, among other things, "had given him a pall or corporal on which he was accustomed to consecrate the Body of CHRIST, and in which also he used to wrap the LORD's Body and carry it with him hanging from his neck. But when he was consecrating the sacred mysteries he placed it on the altar."‡

Bede gives no details of the labours of St Birinus, except that he placed his episcopal see at Dorchester (near Oxford), that "by his labours he called many to the LORD," and that "he built and consecrated churches," among which was one at Winchester, dedicated to St Peter and St Paul.§ Beneath the cathedral church of Winchester his sacred relics now repose.

Mercia and Mid-Anglia or South Mercia were brought to the faith by English and Scottish missionaries, 653–655. They did not swerve under political changes. St Chad, though not the first in order of time, is the most famous of the early bishops who spread and ruled the Church in the central district of England. His little church of St Mary stood near the site of the present cathedral of Lichfield. In an oratory near this church he received a visit of angels announcing his approaching death, and "after he had secured the safety of his departure (*munivit obitum suum*) by the reception of the Body and Blood of the LORD, his soul being delivered from the prison of the body—the angels, as may justly be believed, attending him—he departed to the joys which never end."|| This was on March 2, 672.

It was St Chad's brother, St Cedd, who was God's instrument for reconverting the East Saxons. Thirty-seven years after the banishment of St Mellitus, A.D. 653, King Sigebert III, surnamed the Good, had been persuaded to

\* *Chapters on Early English Church History*, p. 145.

† Bede, II, 15.

‡ *Gesta Pontificum*, p. 157. This history is in perfect harmony with the customs of the early ages, when men were sometimes allowed, in times of persecution or on long journeys, to carry the Holy Eucharist with them. The chronicler of the abbey of Hyde,

in Winchester, writing in the fourteenth century, though using old documents, adds some story about Birinus walking on the sea to fetch his treasure which he had left behind (*Book of Hyde*, p. 12, Rolls Series).

§ Bede, III, 7.

|| *Ib.* IV, 3.

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renounce idolatry by the Northumbrian king Oswy. Having been baptized he was filled with zeal for the salvation of his subjects, and St Cedd with another priest was sent to preach the faith. These East Saxons seem to have verified our LORD's words of the rocky soil. "They received the word of GOD with joy," just as they had done fifty years before; but "having no roots, they believed for a while, but in the time of temptation fell away."

St Cedd converted great numbers, and, having been consecrated bishop by Finan at Lindisfarne, he returned to Essex, and "built churches in various places, and ordained priests and deacons." Bede does not mention his work in London. Indeed, by naming Ithancæster and Tilbury as the centres of his labours, he rather implies that the Londoners did not give him a cordial reception. When the bishop was carried off by the great plague in the year 664, some of his converts "clung with great devotion to the creed they had received," being animated by the example and persuasions of their sub-king Sebbi; whereas another part of the kingdom under Sighere "forsook the mysteries of the Christian faith and turned apostate." They attributed the pestilence to the vengeance of their false gods, and at once "began to restore the temples that had been abandoned and to adore idols." Happily for them the overlord, Wulfhere, King of Mercia, was a zealous Christian. "Understanding therefore that the faith of the province was partly profaned, he sent Bishop Jaruman" to recall them. "He proceeded," says Bede, "with much discretion, as I was informed by a priest who bore him company in that journey, for he was a religious and good man, and travelling through all the country, far and wide, reduced both king and people to the way of righteousness, so that, either forsaking or destroying the temples and altars they had erected, they opened the churches and rejoiced in confessing the name of CHRIST."\*

The South Saxons were the last to be converted. They were a fierce and ignorant people. We have seen the sullen indifference with which they received the preaching of St Dichuil. At last, however, in 681, the time of GOD's visitation came for them. St Wilfrid, then an exile from his own diocese of York, won their hearts by helping them in the time of famine. Ethelwald, their king, had been lately baptized in Mercia. His example was as usual powerful, and was followed by his principal soldiers and nobles. St Wilfrid himself baptized them, and the priests he brought with him soon found abundant work in instructing and baptizing the rest of the nation. The king gave him the promontory of Selsey, with its inhabitants. He founded a monastery, which became the seat of a bishopric, afterwards removed to Chichester. "Wilfrid instructed the people of this territory in the faith of CHRIST, and baptized them all. Among these were 250 men and women slaves, all of whom he, by baptism, not only rescued from the servitude of the devil, but he gave them their bodily liberty also, and exempted them from the yoke of human servitude."†

There is a very interesting story related by St Bede, with regard to St Wilfrid's monastery in Selsey, which well illustrates the history of the Holy Eucharist.‡ St Wilfrid committed the monastery, during his absence, to "the most religious priest of CHRIST, Eappa." Not long after the events above related a grievous mortality ravaged the province. "The brethren in consequence thought fit to keep a fast of three days, and to implore the Divine goodness that it would vouchsafe to extend mercy to them, either by delivering those that were in danger by the distemper from death, or by delivering those who were snatched out of this world from the perpetual damnation of their souls. There was at that

\* Bede, III, 30.

† *Ib.* IV, 13.

‡ *Ib.* IV, 14.



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time in the monastery a little boy of the Saxon nation, lately called to the faith, who had been seized with the same distemper, and had long kept his bed. On the second day of the fasting and supplications it happened that the same boy was, about seven o'clock in the morning, left alone in the place where he lay sick, and through God's appointment the most blessed Princes of the Apostles vouchsafed to appear to him; for he was a child of an extraordinarily mild and innocent disposition, and with a sincere devotion kept the mysteries of the faith which he had received. The Apostles, therefore, saluting him in a most affectionate manner, said: 'Do not, dear child, fear death, about which you are so uneasy, for we will this day conduct you to the heavenly kingdom. But you are first to stay till the Masses are said, that, having received the viaticum of the Body and Blood of the LORD, and delivered from sickness and death, you may be carried up to the everlasting joys of heaven. Call therefore to you the priest Eappa, and tell him that the LORD has heard the prayers of the community, and accepted their devotion and their fast, and that not one more shall die of this plague, either in the monastery or its adjacent possessions. But all your people who anywhere labour under this distemper shall be eased of their pain and restored to their former health, except you alone, who are this day to be delivered by death, and to be carried into heaven, to the vision of our LORD CHRIST, whom you have faithfully served. This favour the Divine mercy has vouchsafed to grant you through the intercession of the religious and God-beloved King Oswald, who formerly ruled over the nation of the Northumbrians; for this very day that king was killed in war by the infidels, and taken up to the everlasting joys of souls in heaven, and associated among the number of the elect. Let them look in their books, wherein the departure of the dead is set down, and they will find that he was this day taken out of this world. Let them therefore celebrate Masses in all the oratories of this house, either in thanksgiving for their prayers being heard, or else in memory of the aforesaid King Oswald. It was because he formerly governed their nation that he has prayed humbly to the LORD for them, as for exiles from his nation. Let then all the brethren assemble in the church and communicate in the heavenly sacrifices, and then, ceasing to fast, refresh their bodies also with food.'

"The boy called the priest and repeated all these words to him. The priest particularly inquired after the habit and form of the men that had appeared to him. He answered: 'Their habit was noble, and their countenance most pleasant and beautiful, such as I had never seen before, nor did I think there could be any men so graceful and comely. One of them was tonsured like a clerk, the other had a long beard; and they said that one of them was called Peter, the other Paul; both of them were the servants of our LORD and SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, sent by Him from heaven to protect our monastery.' The priest believed what the boy said, and, going thence immediately, looked in his Calendar and found that King Oswald had been killed on that very day. He then called the brethren, ordered dinner to be prepared, Masses to be said, and all of them to communicate in the usual way. At the same time he ordered a particle of the LORD's oblation from the same sacrifice to be carried to the sick boy.

"Soon after this the boy died on that same day, and by his death proved that what he had heard from the Apostles of God was true. A further testimony of the truth was that no person died but himself at that time of that monastery. By which vision, many that heard of it were wonderfully excited to implore the Divine mercy in adversity and to adopt the wholesome remedy of fasting. From that time the day of the nativity (martyrdom) of that king and soldier of CHRIST

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began to be yearly honoured with the celebration of Masses, not only in that monastery, but in many other places.”

This history Bede received from Acca, Bishop of Hexham, who affirmed that it had been told him by most faithful brethren of that same monastery. It is full of interest from every point of view: it shows St Oswald watching over and praying for the church of the South Saxons, as he had himself been watched over and prayed for by St Columba, the Apostle of the Northern Picts, and so binds together the whole of Great Britain, from the Orkneys to the Isle of Wight,\* in one communion of prayer and sacred rites and of heavenly patronage. But, even should anyone doubt the truth of the child's vision, the testimony of Bede would still remain to the faith and practices of piety which he relates, and which were of course matters with which he was familiar. We see many oratories even in a newly-constructed monastery, with altars where many priests can say Mass at the same time. We see a church in which the high or public Mass is said, and at which the lay brethren communicate as usual. We see the viaticum administered under one species (*particulam*) to the dying boy; and though he is a child (*puerulus*) and only recently baptized, it is evidently not his first communion, and he is well instructed in the faith. We notice the hour at which Masses were usually offered—about nine o'clock—and we see some of the intentions of the sacrifice. These are matters on which much will have to be said. Let us first make a general survey of the work thus happily begun and of the obstacles to its completion.

At the beginning of the seventh century the greater part of England was covered with the dark clouds of paganism. On the land occupied by the Teutonic invaders one bright star alone is seen shining at Canterbury, the altar where Bishop Liudhard says Mass and Queen Bertha communicates. But as, when the wind rises, the clouds disperse, and for a time there are clear spaces in the heavens filled with stars, and then again these are hidden by the clouds, and afterwards other and larger spaces are opened, until at last the clouds are cleared away and the whole heavens are one brilliant field of light, so was it with England. Churches were built and heathen temples closed; then the temples were re-opened, and churches were shut or burnt. But at last the Spirit of God moving in the hearts of men triumphed over the demons of idolatry, and at the end of the century there was no longer a heathen temple standing unpurified or unsanctified.

Still the work was not complete. The closing of heathen temples had to be followed by the removal of ignorance and vice from heathen hearts. They had to be regenerated by the sacrament of baptism, and, according to our Lord's commission, taught “to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded.” One of the first steps towards this work was to send priests everywhere among the people. But before this could be done the priests themselves had to be found. The number of those who came from Italy and Gaul was small, and though the Irish from North Britain gave zealous and efficient help, yet a native clergy was a first necessity. Hence St Cedd at once ordained priests and deacons, and St Aidan even ransomed slaves and gave them the instruction necessary for the priesthood, that they might help in the conversion of their fellow-countrymen; and Bede urged Egbert to ordain priests to preach in the villages. Of course neither the Italian nor the Irish priests were familiar with the Saxon tongue, and had sometimes to preach by the help of an interpreter. King Edwin gladly

\*The Isle of Wight, once Christian, had been thither the priest, Hiddila, and Mass was once more utterly pagan for two centuries, when St Wilfrid sent offered (Bede, iv, 16).



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performed this office for St Paulinus, and King Oswald for St Aidan. The advantage of having priests who could speak the language of the people was so great that the bishops seem at first to have been satisfied with the absolutely

indispensable amount of ecclesiastical learning. Though the liturgy of the Mass was invariably in Latin, and no other tongue was ever used for the divine office or for the administration of sacraments, yet Bede tells us there were in his time, in the North, many *sacerdotes idiotæ*, priests who might be able to read Latin, but who knew little of it, and were only familiar with their own language. Perhaps in the South the discipline was more severe, since in St Theodore's genuine Penitential we read that "Holy Communion (*Sacrificium*) is not to be received from a priest who cannot properly (*secundum ritum*) recite the prayers and lessons."\*

At a very early period resident priests, whether monastic or secular, were attached to country churches.† Possibly the South was for a time better supplied with such churches than the North. In 734, Venerable Bede wrote to Egbert, Archbishop of York, complaining that in mountainous and remote regions, for years together, the bishop was never seen; and that not only no bishop went to confirm the baptized, but that no preacher was there to teach the faith and the difference between right and wrong, though care was taken that every one paid his tribute to the bishop; and he exhorts Egbert to ordain priests, who might give themselves to preaching the word of God in every village, to the consecration of the heavenly



STOLE FROM ST CUTHBERT'S TOMB

mysteries (*consecrandis mysteriis cælestibus*), and especially to administering baptism. It was probably partly owing to this letter, which was the saintly historian's last legacy to the Church, that measures were taken more strenu-

\* Haddan and Stubbs, vol. III, p. 192.

† There can be no doubt that St Willibrord copied in Frisia the system in which he had been brought up. Now Alcuin says in his life that many laymen were moved by their newly-acquired faith to offer

him land (*patrimonia sua*). He ordered churches to be built on these lands, and appointed priests in each of them (*statuitque per eas [sc. ecclesias] singulos presbyteros*). (*Opera Alc.* tom. II, 188).

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ously to supply the want, as we see to have been the case from the legislation of councils held after his death. Yet long before this time, though resident pastors had not been appointed, many zealous priests had been found to go about among the country folk; St Boniface, who was himself an assiduous missionary in England before he went to convert the heathen on the Continent, remembered that when he was a child five years old (A.D. 685) "it was the custom in England for priests and clerks to go about preaching to the people, stopping for a time in the houses of laymen."\* And in these missionary labours, that the poorest serfs or bondmen were not forgotten or excluded from the holy sacraments and holy Mass, is made known incidentally—for it was quite unnecessary to state it explicitly—in what is said of St Boniface, "that he neither flattered the rich nor was too severe with slaves."†

Bede complained of the want of priests settled in remote districts, and also perhaps of a falling off in missionary zeal, yet he has recorded many beautiful examples which show how the knowledge of the faith, and with it the possession of the most Holy Sacrifice, was gradually propagated throughout the land.

In the early years of St Cuthbert, before he entered the monastery of Melrose, about 650, an occurrence is related which shows that in spite of their baptism the hearts of the rustics were sometimes infected with their ancient paganism. For, seeing some monks being driven out to sea and in danger of being lost at the mouth of the Tyne, the people "began to deride their manner of life, as if they had deserved their fate by abandoning the usual life of men and framing new rules for themselves. When Cuthbert rebuked them and bade them pray, they replied angrily: 'Let none pray for them, and may God spare none of them, for they have taken away from men the ancient rites and customs, and how the new ones are to be attended to nobody knows.'"‡

Some years later, when Cuthbert, who had witnessed this outburst of heathen petulance, was a monk and a priest, his zeal was stirred to instruct these ignorant men. "He used often," says Bede, § "to go out from his monastery (of Melrose), sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot, to preach the way of truth to the neighbouring villages, as Boisil, his predecessor, had done before him. It was at this time customary for the English people to flock together when a clerk or priest entered a village, and listen to what he said, that so they might learn something from him and amend their lives.

"Now Cuthbert was so skilful in teaching, so affectionate in his persuasions, and had so angelic a light beaming from his countenance, that none dared conceal from him the secrets of their hearts, but they confessed openly what they had done, for they were convinced that nothing could be concealed from him, and they expiated the faults they had confessed by worthy fruits of penance, according as he imposed them.

"He was also wont to seek out and preach in those remote villages which were situated far from the world in wild mountain places and fearful to behold, and which, as well by their poverty as by their distance up the country, prevented intercourse between them and such as could instruct their inhabitants. He often remained a week, sometimes two or three, or even a whole month without returning to his monastery, but dwelling in the mountains called the people to heavenly things both by his preaching and his holy life."||

\* See Life by St Willibald, apud Migne, *Patrol.* tom. LXXXIX, p. 605.

† *Ib.* p. 609.

‡ Bede, *Vita S. Cuthb.* cap. 3. § *Ib.* cap. 9.

|| It is curious that, in giving this extract from Bede, Skene (*Celtic Scotland*, vol. II, p. 208) omits

the whole passage about the administration of the sacrament of penance, so that for his readers the identity between the missions of St Cuthbert in the seventh century and those of Catholic priests in the nineteenth is lost. The saint merely appears as a preacher, not as a confessor.



# THE ANGLO-SAXON FAITH

This account given by Venerable Bede of North Britain in the seventh century is exactly similar to the records of the "missions" given by St Francis Regis in the mountains of Switzerland in the seventeenth century, of St Leonard in Corsica or St Alphonsus in Calabria in the eighteenth. St Cuthbert, though not charged with the cure of souls, leaves the retirement of the cloister to catechize, to exhort, to hear confessions, for a week, a fortnight or a month; and though Bede does not here mention it, from similar histories we know that he said Mass daily, and gave communion to all whom he could prepare, according to the canonical discipline then in force. Authors of Jansenistical tendencies complain\* that it was the missions of itinerant preachers and confessors of the orders of St Dominic and St Francis in the thirteenth century that made the observance of canonical penance previous to communion impossible, and thus changed the Church's discipline. But it would seem that they should have gone back at least six centuries earlier. They would have found similar facts, and an author, like Venerable Bede, not lamenting over, but rejoicing, in the results.

The words of Bede supply also a refutation of an error of a contrary character. In Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* we read as if it were a proved fact, that to a period considerably later than that of St Cuthbert or St Bede, confession, though a common practice, was not considered of strict obligation. Most certainly neither the simple mountaineers of Bernicia, nor their saintly missionary, nor his learned biographer had heard of this view of the subject. St Cuthbert had evidently taught them that confession must be made for grievous sins committed after baptism, and penance performed as imposed by the confessor. On this supposition only can we explain Bede's remark, that, however shame might have tempted them to keep back their sins or confess them imperfectly, yet they confessed clearly and openly, no one *daring* to keep the most secret thing hidden (*nullus latebras ei sui cordis† celare præsumeret, omnes palam quæ gesserant, confitendo proferrent*).

I have purposely dwelt on this incident, because we thus learn the character of the teaching of the great missionaries of those days—the Aidans, Kentigerns, Columbas and the rest, whose biographers generally dwell on the personal incidents of their lives, their miracles, or the details of their virtues, rather than on their doctrine and discipline, which were of course those of the whole Catholic Church, and therefore well known to the readers whom alone those biographers or historians could foresee.

## CHAPTER IV. THE ANGLO-SAXON FAITH

TO those who share the conviction of Venerable Bede, the great spokesman of the Anglo-Saxon times, that the Catholic Church has never erred and never can err, because she is the Spouse of CHRIST and has received the HOLY GHOST for her dowry, there is no need to prove that the early Church was one in faith regarding the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar with the Church of to-day, and for them it will be enough to know that the Scots and Piëts were in communion of worship with the Anglo-Saxons, and both with the Church of Rome, to be sure that, when St Gregory planned a new hierarchy for Great Britain in the sixth century, the same faith was preached, the

\* Chardon, *Histoire des Sacrements*, "Pénitence," § III, pt. 4, ch. I. Fleury, 6<sup>e</sup> discours: "Ces missionnaires passagers ne pouvaient suivre pendant un long temps la conduite des pénitents pour

examiner le progrès et la solidité de leur conversion," etc.

† This is the very expression used by the Council of Trent.

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same sacrifice offered, as when Pius IX and Leo XIII divided the island in the present century. Nor ought it to be difficult to convince any unprejudiced mind of this identity of faith by the identity of language on the subject of the Eucharist. A modern Catholic reading the life of St Columba, written by Adamnan in 696, or *The Ecclesiastical History of England*, written by Bede in 736, will find every formula familiar to himself, and expressing his faith exactly as well as adequately. Protestants, on the contrary, whether Calvinists, Zuinglians, Lutherans or High Church Anglicans, are uneasy at such language, carefully avoid it themselves, and sometimes even distort or evade it when making quotations. To give one example. Bede relates that King Ethelbert gave St Augustine the old church of St Martin, and that "in this they began to meet, to chant psalms, to offer prayers, to celebrate Masses (*missas facere*), to preach and to baptize."\* In relating this Carte says they preached and performed "other acts of devotion"; Collier that they "preached, baptized and performed all the solemn offices of religion"; Churton that they "administered the sacraments."

Such vague expressions show well enough a want of sympathy with Bede, even as regards so simple and venerable an expression as Mass. How much less then would Protestants use or understand the various periphrases so familiar to Bede and to all our early writers: as the celebration of the most sacred mysteries, the celestial and mysterious sacrifice, the offering of the Victim of salvation, the sacrifice of the Mediator, the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, the memorial of CHRIST's great passion, the renewal of the passion and death of the Lamb! All these expressions are used by Bede;† and for the Blessed Sacrament itself (as distinct from the rite of offering it to God)—besides the more common designations *Hostia* and *Sacrificium* (in the vernacular, *Housel*)—they would speak of the saving Victim of the LORD's Body and Blood, the Victim without an equal, a particle of the sacrifice of the LORD's offering. These expressions are also found in Bede. Adamnan the Scot speaks of the sacrifice of the Mass, the sacrificial mystery, the mysteries of the most Holy Sacrifice; and he tells us of the priest at the altar who performs the mysteries of CHRIST, consecrates the mysteries of the Eucharist, celebrates the solemnities of Masses.‡

If we turn to the writings of Eddi, or St Boniface, or St Egbert, or to the decrees of early councils, we find the same or similar phrases, varied in every possible way to express a mystery, the sublimity of which was beyond human utterance. A multitude of verbs were in common use to designate the action of the priest at the altar. *Missam cantare* or *canere* might designate the whole action, though with special allusion to the vocal prayers. *Missam facere*, *offerre*, *celebrare*, *agere*, would also refer to the whole divine action; *conficere*, *immolare*, *libare*, regarded the *Hostia*, or Victim, which was our LORD's Body and Blood, or our Divine LORD Himself; and the secret operation by which the bread and wine were changed into our LORD's Body and Blood was indicated by every word by which transubstantiation can be expressed, among which we find *transferre*, *commutare*, *transcribere*, *transformare*, *convertere*.

\*Bede, I, 26.

†See Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, I, ch. 7. The expressions will be found in his history and homilies: "celebratis missarum solemnibus" (II, 5), "victimam pro eo (defuncto) sacræ oblationis offerre" (III, 2), "particula de sacrificio Dominicæ oblationis" (IV, 14), "oblatio hostiæ salutaris, sacrificium salutare" (IV, 22), "sacrificium Deo victimæ salutaris offerre" (IV, 28),

"corpus sacrosanctum et pretiosum agni sanguinem quo a peccatis redempti sumus denuo Deo in profectum nostræ salutis immolamus" (*Hom. in Vig. Pasch.*).

‡"Sacrificale mysterium," "sacrosancti sacrificii mysteria," "munda mysteria," "sacra Eucharistiæ celebrare mysteria," "missarum solemnibus peragere," "mysteria conficere," etc. (*Vita S. Col.*, II, 1; I, 40, 44; III, 17).



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In spite of all this evidence, which exists in abundance, and lies, so to say, on the very surface of Anglo-Saxon religious literature, there are still Protestants who affirm that transubstantiation was unknown to the Anglo-Saxon Church. It will in all probability be useless to offer further proofs on this subject to those whose minds are prejudiced. Yet it may be of service to some to remind them that with equal plausibility it might be denied that Catholics hold the doctrine of transubstantiation at the present day. How, it may be asked, do Catholics now succeed in expressing their belief not only to themselves but even to their opponents? Whatever answer is given to this question, it is easy to show that the very same tests, when applied to the Anglo-Saxon Church, will give the same result. Perhaps it would be said that modern Catholics hold the Real Presence of our LORD not in some vague and undefined mode, as many Anglicans do, but that they make formal and explicit declaration of their belief in a change of substance; or that they not only call the sacrament our LORD's Flesh and Blood, but speak of it as containing CHRIST Himself; or again that among them, reports are current of miracles and visions attesting the Real Presence of Him who died on the Cross. Let us then take these three tests and see how they apply to the faith of the disciples of St Augustine, St Paulinus or St Aidan.

1. First, then, Catholics are very explicit in saying what they mean by speaking of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. They use expressions that do not admit of being taken vaguely and metaphorically. They imply change of substance. Would anyone, for instance, mistake the meaning of the following letter addressed to a Catholic priest? "I beg you will not forget your friend's name in your holy prayer. Store it up in one of the caskets of your memory, and bring it out in fitting time when you have consecrated bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of CHRIST." Are not these words explicit? Well, they were indeed used in writing to a Catholic priest, but it was more than a thousand years ago, and he who used them was Alcuin,\* the disciple of Bede. And Alcuin's scholar, Aimo, writing in A.D. 841, says:† "That the substance of the bread and wine, which are placed upon the altar, is made the Body and Blood of CHRIST, by the mysterious action of the priest and thanksgiving, GOD effecting this by His divine grace and secret power, it would be the most monstrous madness to doubt. We believe then, and faithfully confess and hold, that the substance of bread and wine, by the operation of divine power—the nature, I say, of bread and wine is substantially converted into another substance, that is, into Flesh and Blood. Surely it is not impossible to the omnipotence of Divine Wisdom to change natures once created into whatever it may choose, since when it pleased it created them from nothing. He who could make something out of nothing can find no difficulty in changing one thing to another. It is then the invisible Priest who converts visible creatures into the substance

\*Alcuin, *Ep.* 36, *ad Paulinum Patriarcham Aquilensem*.

†[Migne, P. L., cxviii, 815. It must be confessed that we cannot with full confidence assign this tractate to Aimo, more commonly written Haymo, of Halberstadt. Its authorship has been disputed by Hauck and other authorities. But if some doubt must be felt about this passage, a phrase which occurs in nearly all our Anglo-Saxon Pontificals is hardly less explicit. When consecrating the altar, in the rite of the consecration of a church, the Bishop prays that the altar may be worthy of its function, viz.: that thereupon "a secret power may transform those

creatures chosen for the sacrifice into the Body and Blood of the Redeemer" and that "as the Word was made flesh, so the blessed nature of the oblation may be elevated (or elevate us) into the substance of the Word." *Dignumque sit supra quod electas ad sacrificium creaturas in corpus et sanguinem redemptoris virtus secreta convertat, et in sacras agni hostias invisibili mutatione transcribat, ut sicut verbum caro factum est ita in verbi substantiam benedicta oblationis natura proficiat, et quod prius victui fuerat alimonia, vita hic efficiatur aeterna.* See *The Benedictional of Archbishop Robert* (Henry Bradshaw Society) p. 85.]

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of His own Flesh and Blood by His secret power. In this which we call the Body and Blood of CHRIST, the taste and appearance of bread and wine remain, to remove all horror from those who receive, but the nature of the substances is altogether changed into the Body and Blood of CHRIST. The senses tell us one thing, faith tells us another. The senses can only tell what they perceive, but the intelligence tells us of the true Flesh and Blood of CHRIST, and faith confesses it."

I would observe that Aimo does not say that the senses are deceived; on the contrary, he says that they convey true messages to the mind—*sensus carnis nihil aliud renuntiare possunt quam sentiunt*—but that the mind would be deceived if it formed its usual judgement on their testimony. The senses tell us nothing about substance, the existence of which is known by reason. And reason judges rightly, as a general rule, that where the accidents of bread and wine appear, there is also the substance. But reason does not tell us that this is necessarily so. There is always this tacit exception—unless by God's omnipotence it is otherwise. And God's revelation tells us that in the case of the consecrated bread and wine *it is* otherwise; that the natural substance is not there, but is converted (*transubstantiatur*) into the substance of our LORD's Flesh and Blood. St Thomas of Aquin says: "The accidents subsist in this sacrament without a subject, that faith may find room, when a visible thing is received invisibly, being hidden under a foreign appearance; and *yet the senses are kept free from deception*, since they judge about the accidents which are known to them." When the same great doctor writes:

Visus, tactus, gustus in Te fallitur,  
Sed auditu solo tuto creditur,

he does not contradict himself. He means that the senses are deceived, not in the things of which they are proper judges, viz., the accidents, but in CHRIST's Presence (*in Te*), for this they cannot detect and have no means of reaching.\*

It seemed good to make this commentary on Aimo's words, that it may be seen that these old writers did not speak at random; and also to meet the ordinary Protestant objection, that the God of truth could not deceive us by subjecting our senses to illusion. But, putting aside the question of the change of substance being imperceptible to the senses, was not Aimo right, it may be asked, in believing in God's power to make the change? To those who deny creation such a doctrine as transubstantiation has of course no significance; but surely in itself, and to those who reflect on what they believe, it is much harder to say: "I believe that God called into being things that were not," than to say: "I believe that God, after becoming man, has instituted, for most wise and loving reasons, the change of our bodies' food into his own substantial Presence, who is the Bread of Life." His divine power changed man from senseless clay into a living being of flesh and blood, yet imposed on him at the same time the law that he should support that flesh and blood on the fruits of the earth whence he was taken; is it then not conceivable that, having redeemed that fallen creature, He should find a means in harmony with his double nature, to make him feed on his true life? Thus the outward forms of bread and wine remind him of the dust from which he was taken, while the hidden Presence reminds him of the end for which he was created, and of the redemption by which that end is again placed within his reach. The words, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,"

\* On the other theory of *species intentionales* see Theol. Wirceburgensis *De Sac. Euch.*, n. 284. In this system also there is no deception.



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have never more fullness of meaning to the soul of a Catholic than in the act of assisting at Mass or receiving Holy Communion. The doctrine of transubstantiation is also in perfect harmony with the history of God's prodigies both in the Old and New Testaments. He converted a dry rod into a living serpent, and the living serpent He changed back again into a dry rod; is it then incredible to believers in Scripture that bread and wine should be transformed into the living and life-giving Flesh and Blood of CHRIST, and that, when the outward species are corrupted, the flesh and blood should cease to be present, and the former substances, as some think, be again restored? \* The Son of God Himself took flesh at the word of a woman by the operation of the Holy Ghost; is it incredible to Christians that by the power of the same Holy Ghost, at the consecration of the priest, using CHRIST's own words and doing so by His own command, He should be again as it were incarnate? He changed water into wine to grace an earthly nuptial feast; is it contrary to analogy that he should change wine into His Blood in celebrating the perpetual banquet with the souls of men? During the days of His mortality He showed His Body at one time walking on the waves of the sea, at another lifted up from the earth and all-glorious at His Transfiguration; is it to be thought so strange that, now it is glorified above the heavens, He should for our sakes reduce it to conditions which exceed our experience and baffle our comprehension? He appeared and disappeared suddenly and mysteriously during the forty days He spent on earth after His resurrection, passing through the closed sepulchre and penetrating the closed doors; was it not to accustom us to modes of being remote from ordinary laws? And lastly, He multiplied visibly yet incomprehensibly the loaves of bread, distributing them by His Apostles' hands, till, after feeding thousands, the fragments that remained far surpassed in bulk the loaves unbroken; shall we then murmur when He promises to feed the millions of His Church on "His Flesh which is meat indeed," and "His Blood which is drink indeed," and shall we say: "This saying is hard, who can hear it?" etc. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

II. To proceed now to our second test. Modern Catholics speak of the Holy Eucharist as containing CHRIST Himself. This follows necessarily from our belief in the presence of His Flesh and Blood, for these can now neither be really separated one from the other, nor from our LORD's soul, much less from His Divinity. Yet at the present day there are Anglican writers who admit with us that CHRIST's Flesh and Blood are present beneath the veils of bread and wine, yet deny that He Himself is there to receive our adoration. They seem to have meditated little on our LORD's words: "He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood *abideth in Me, and I in him*. As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he *that eateth Me*, the same also shall live by Me." But our forefathers pondered more deeply on divine things. The very earliest document of the faith of the Anglo-Saxon Church is the letter written by St Gregory to St Augustine. In this he contrasts the angel who appeared on Sinai with the LORD of the angels who is contained in the Blessed Sacrament. "If so much purity," he says, "was then required, where God spoke to the people by the means of a subject creature, how much ought those to be purer who receive the *Body of Almighty God*, lest they be burdened with the greatness of that unutterable mystery!" The same great doctor of the Church, and of the English in particular, says in his Book of Dialogues: "This sacrifice of His Body and Blood

\* "*Speciebus corruptis desinit præsentia Domini, et sub nova forma producitur materia, probabiliter pristina quæ in consecratione esse desierat*" (Schouppe, *Theol. Dog.*, Tr. XIII, n. 173). There have, however, been various opinions in the Catholic schools on it. (See Harper's *Peace through the Truth*, first series, pp. 206-9.)

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saveth the soul from everlasting destruction, which reneweth to us through the mystery the death of the only begotten Son of GOD, who truly arose from the dead, and after that dieth no more, nor hath death any more dominion over Him; yet though he be living in Himself immortal and incorruptible, *He is again sacrificed for us* in the mystery of the holy oblation."

Since St Gregory believed that the GOD of the angels is present in the Holy Eucharist, no wonder that he teaches that the angels also are present around the altar to adore Him. "Who then of believing men," he asks, "can have any doubt that during the time of oblation the heavens are opened at the prayer and voice of the priest? Who doubteth of this, that troops of angels are present during the mystery of JESUS CHRIST?"

All the above words of St Gregory were familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, and they often make them their own.\*

The following prayer for the blessing of the altar canopy or ciborium gives another clear proof of the faith of the Anglo-Saxon Church:

"Almighty and everlasting GOD, we beseech Thy ineffable clemency, that Thou wouldst deign to pour Thy heavenly blessing upon this covering of Thy venerable altar, on which Thy only begotten Son, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who is the propitiation for our sins, is constantly immolated by the hands of the faithful, and under which the bodies of Thy saints are placed which were truly the ark of the covenant."† Here the bodies of the saints are mere relics, for their souls are absent, but the Body of JESUS CHRIST is JESUS CHRIST Himself, who is rightly surrounded by the relics of those whom He redeemed, and who have honoured His Redemption by their lives and deaths.

III. The third test which I proposed of Anglo-Saxon faith was this. There are many stories current amongst modern Catholics regarding visions, apparitions and miracles, by which the Real Presence of JESUS CHRIST beneath the sacramental veils has been attested. Protestants may consider these to be either delusions or impostures, yet they do accept them as evidence of our belief. Why, then, if similar stories were current among the Anglo-Saxons, should not the same conclusion be drawn? Now there were many such, and a few may be here related in the very words of those who first recorded them. The first is the vision of St Edward. It is thus related by the Abbot St Aelred, who was born about forty years after St Edward's death.

"In the monastery of St Peter, which he had rebuilt or enlarged, before the altar of the Blessed TRINITY the most Christian King was assisting at the mysteries of our redemption. Count Leofric, whose memory is in benediction, and who can never be named without reverence and spiritual joy, was present together with his wife Godgiva.

"The holy count was standing at a little distance from the king. The holy mystery was being celebrated at the altar, and the divine sacraments were in the priest's hands, when behold He who is beauteous beyond the sons of men, JESUS CHRIST, appeared standing on the altar visible to the bodily eyes of both, and with His right hand stretched over the king He blessed him with the sign of the cross. The king, bowing his head, adored the presence of the divine Majesty, and with humble posture paid honour to so great a blessing.

"But the count, not knowing what was passing in the mind of the king, and wishing him to share in so great a vision, began to draw near to him. But

\*Bede quotes the letter, and has a passage exactly similar about the angels. Werfrith of Worcester, one of the literary assistants of King Alfred, translated the *Dialogues* into Anglo-Saxon. [The

version has been published by the Early English Text Society.]

†Anglo-Saxon Pontifical in British Museum (Tiberius, c. 1, fol. 106); Rock, 1, 17.



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the king, knowing his thoughts, said: 'Stop, Leofric, stop; I see what you see.' They both give themselves up to prayers and tears, and are inebriated with the fullness of God's house and drink of the torrent of His delights. When Mass is over they converse on the heavenly vision.

"The king forbids the count to mention it to anyone during his life. In this he imitates our LORD after the Transfiguration. The count merely tells it to a religious at Worcester in confession, binding him also to secrecy, but begging him to write it that it may be revealed later on. This was done, and so it became known after the king's death."\*

Another history is that of St Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 959.

"About this time some clerks, seduced by a malignant error, tried to assert that the bread and wine which are placed on the altar, after consecration remain in their first substance, and are only the figure of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and not His true Body and Blood. The blessed Odo, wishing to destroy this enormous perfidy, one day, while devoutly offering the sacred rites of the Mass in the presence of the whole people, with tears besought the clemency of God Almighty to favour his ministry so as to destroy their error and show the substantial nature of the divine mysteries. When he had come to the breaking of the life-giving bread—O ineffable mercy of God! O evident presence of the Divine Majesty!—blood immediately began to drip from the fragments of the Body of CHRIST which the pontiff held in his hands. He shed tears of joy, and called to the assistant ministers, that those specially should draw near who had lately staggered in faith. They came quickly; and, stupefied at the contemplation of such wonders, they cried out with trembling voice: 'O most happy of men to whom the Son of God thus reveals Himself in the flesh!' and again: 'Pray, O father, the Divine Majesty, that this Blood be changed back into its first form, that the divine vengeance overtake us not for our incredulity.' The priest prayed, and after his prayer looked at the altar, and where he had placed the Blood he found the accustomed species of wine. When he had partaken of the heavenly sacraments, to the joy of all who were present at this great spectacle, the bishop commanded the poor to be gathered from every side, and a solemn feast to be prepared for them, for a memorial of this miracle."

I have given this history as it is recorded by Eadmer,† the friend of St Anselm, and himself brought up in Canterbury. There is certainly no improbability of the event having been accurately handed down in Odo's own church for a hundred years. But Bishop Stubbs, in his learned and candid *Introduction to the Lives of St Dunstan*, seems to consider that it gives proof of a development of doctrine, and that Eadmer is attributing to the Saxon Church a fullness of belief in the Real Presence which was of a later period, being the result of the controversies with Berengarius.‡ I call attention to this, not so much for the purpose of discussing the credibility of the particular miracle as for the admission contained in the learned Bishop's criticism. It implies that belief in such visions or miracles could be current only where there coexists a fully developed and explicit belief in transubstantiation, such as is not denied to have been the doctrine of Lanfranc and the Norman Church. Now such histories as have just been related have been current among Catholics from the earliest periods in East and West. They are related by St Gregory of Tours in

\*St Ælred's *Life of St Edward* has been printed by Hardy. It is printed also by Wharton in the *Anglia Sacra*, tom. II. Migne in his *Patrol. Lat.* tom. cxcv, col. 760.

†It is attributed to Osbern by the Bollandists, but was written by Eadmer, as is shown by Sir T. D. *Memorials of St Dunstan* (Rolls Series, 1874), p. LXIII, Cf. p. LXVII.

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the sixth century, by St Arsenius in the fifth, by Palladius in the fourth, by St Cyprian in the third.\* But to keep to this country. John the Deacon expressly declares that in his time (he wrote about A.D. 875) a history was wont to be read in the English churches about the miracles of St Gregory the Great—how that at his prayers on one occasion the sacred Host took the form of a finger dropping with blood, to convict the incredulity of a lady. So also Paschasius Radbert, writing in the middle of the ninth century, tells us a very similar vision granted at the prayers of a priest named Plecgils in the church of St Ninian at Whitherne in Galloway, and he says that this was read in the acts of the English (*in gestis Anglorum*).

But to return to the vision of St Odo. When Bishop Stubbs published his *Memorials of St Dunstan* in 1874, there existed a unique MS. of the life of St Oswald of York, to which the learned Professor had himself called attention as “an invaluable and almost unknown evidence for the reign of Edgar and Ethelred.” It had been written during the episcopate of Archbishop Ælfric (A.D. 995-1005), and therefore half a century before the Norman conquest and a century before Eadmer’s *Life of St Odo*. In 1879 this MS. was published for the first time by Canon Raine,† and it is found to contain not a Norman but a Saxon account of the vision of St Odo. The substance of the history is identical with that of Eadmer, while the differences in detail are very instructive. The anonymous writer, a monk of Ramsey, who had been intimate with St Oswald, Odo’s nephew, and had probably learnt from him what he relates, writes as follows: “On a certain day when he (i.e., Archbishop Odo) was offering pontifically to the Great King (i.e., to God) the worthy ministry of the divine Sacrament, and was celebrating apart with his (household) the paschal feast of the glorious Lamb (of God), that heavenly Lamb deigned to console him by the following miracle. After the recitation of the Gospel and the offering of the Divine Gift, and when his soul was full of compunction and his eyes flowing with tears, such as are often shed by the faithful and happy worshippers of God, amidst these holy mysteries this trusted friend of the Redeemer began to touch with chaste hands the species of His Body (*Ejusdem effigiem corporis*). While he was doing this, he beheld an ancient miracle renewed in our times. For a drop of Blood flowed from the true Flesh of CHRIST’S Body (*fluxit gutta sanguinis ex vera carne Christi corporis*). On beholding this most clearly with his eyes he marvelled; his mind was filled with fear, and he was troubled in spirit. He calls immediately a faithful attendant who was near at hand, and secretly shows him the miracle. To whom the priest replied: ‘Rejoice, most reverend father, since CHRIST the Son of God has to-day so honoured thee, that thou hast been worthy to see with thy bodily eyes Him who is over all, God blessed for ever. Pray,‡ I beseech you, the power of the ineffable God, to make His Body return to its first form.’ And when he had prayed he arose, and found It as It was before, and received It with exultation of soul. On that day he ordered all the poor, the pilgrims, the orphans and widows to be assembled, to whom, in honour of so great a miracle, he commanded that a solemn feast should be given. Thus it came to pass that while the head of the Kentish city was feeding on a heavenly banquet, the members were feasted on earthly food.”

\*After quoting the words of Palladius, who died in 431, a critic in *The Spectator* (Nov. 15, 1879, p. 1,447) says: “The sooner the attempt to find a Protestant theology in patristic literature is given up, the better;” though he characteristically adds: “But Protestant

theology need not be one whit weaker for that.”

† *The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, vol. 1 (Rolls Series, 1879).

‡ “Exoro, quæso” (Raine, p. 407), probably by a slip of the writer of the MS. for “exora, quæso.”



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The fact of the great banquet given to the poor by St Odo in honour of some great prodigy at the altar can scarcely be called in question, related as it is both by Eadmer and by this contemporary writer. That the prodigy consisted in the truth of transubstantiation being made visible is also related by both; and let him deny or explain away the miracle who will, at least this is evident—that the Saxon writer of the tenth century held exactly the same faith in this regard as the Norman writer of the eleventh century. In one respect the story has grown and somewhat changed in Eadmer's narrative. Eadmer, perhaps preoccupied with the thought of Lanfranc's contest with Berengarius, declares that there were some among the clergy of Canterbury who doubted the Real Presence, and that Odo asked the miracle for these and showed it to them. The Saxon writer, on the contrary, mentions no doubters; he supposes the miracle granted as a simple grace to the saintly celebrant, and to be witnessed by only one other, a faithful priest. Not a word indicates that the Saxon writer has any controversial or dogmatic purpose in relating the miracle. His only remark is that in his own day God had once more granted a prodigy which had often been witnessed in the early Church (*antiquum miraculum nostris temporibus renovatum*). Thus then, about fifty years before Berengarius began to sow doubts in France, this monk of Ramsey testifies not only to the faith, but to the antiquity of the faith, of the Anglo-Saxon Church in transubstantiation.

Nor should the words in which this is related be passed over inattentively. The narrator makes St Odo's attendant priest say to him: "CHRIST the Son of God has so honoured you, that you have seen with your bodily eyes Him who is over all, the blessed God." (*Sic hodie te Christus, Filius Dei, honoravit, ut Eum, qui est super omnia benedictus Deus, carnalibus perspicere dignus fuisti obtutibus.*) Now, what had he seen? Some drops of blood flowing from flesh. He had seen (such at least was the belief of the Saxon monk) with bodily eyes what was always present in the consecrated Host, though only visible to faith. The expression here used is a



A PRIEST SAYING MASS

From an Ivory of the ninth century at Frankfort



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bold one, yet dogmatically correct. "He had seen God." This implies that the Flesh and Blood are ever united with the Divinity, and are therefore worthy of supreme adoration. The Saxon Church was therefore one with us in saying: "Blessed and praised every moment be the most holy and divine Sacrament." But we say this, not because an unknown monk of the tenth century said it also, but because that Church which has received from her Divine Spouse the Spirit of Truth as her dower declares now, as in every former age, that she is in possession of these stupendous Mysteries. If He who founded the Church has kept the promise that He made to be with her all days, even to the consummation of the world, by His Spirit, then must He also be present all days in His Flesh, because this is her belief and teaching, and her perpetual song of joy and thanksgiving.

When Æcolampadius, after being a priest and religious of the order of St Bridget, became first a disciple of Luther and afterwards with Zuingli founder of the sacramentarian heresy, he attempted to defend his new views and give them a ground in antiquity by explaining away the language used by the holy fathers about the Real Presence. His opponent, Cardinal Fisher, was so indignant at the impudent perversions to which Æcolampadius resorted, that he exclaimed: "Why, by such means you might as easily prove that you yourself never held the Real Presence, and might explain away the sermon which you published a few years back in its defence; for certainly you said then nothing stronger or clearer than had been said by the fathers whom you now distort." Fisher was quite right. He who undertakes to prove that St John Chrysostom did not hold the doctrine of transubstantiation might as successfully maintain the same thing of Bossuet. And he who would deny that the Anglo-Saxon Church held on the subject of the Eucharist the doctrines afterwards defined by the Council of Trent, might also deny that the Council of Trent defined the doctrines now held by Roman Catholics.

[For good and very intelligible reasons Father Bridgett thought well to supplement his chapter on "Anglo-Saxon Faith" by another which he entitled "An Historical Controversy—Ælfric." The importance of the question of Ælfric's orthodoxy regarding the doctrine of transubstantiation, a question which had been very warmly debated between Dr Lingard and a number of Protestant assailants, is now no longer so keenly felt. For one thing, it is by this time generally admitted that the Ælfric in question was not, as used commonly to be supposed, the Archbishop of Canterbury of that name, but only the Abbot of Eynsham in Oxfordshire. But secondly, there can be no doubt that the arguments of such able controversialists as Father Bridgett and Dr Lingard have not been without their effect. It is quite true that Ælfric lays great stress upon the view that the presence of CHRIST our LORD in the Holy Eucharist was a "ghostly" (i.e., spiritual) and not a bodily presence, but then we must remember that he wrote before any heresy had been broached upon this subject, and consequently before preachers and theologians began to be careful about the misunderstandings to which their language might give rise. Ælfric in his homilies seems only to have wished to insist upon the truth that there was nothing gross or carnal in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, probably believing that for the undeveloped minds of the men he was addressing it was the spiritual effect of the sacrament that most needed to be emphasized. But we need not dwell upon the subject here, and it will be sufficient to point out that a considerable change of opinion has taken place among Anglican controversialists, which may be conveniently illustrated by two



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utterances delivered at different periods by the well-known historical writer, the Rev. William Hunt. In the article "Ælfric," which this scholar contributed to the *Dictionary of National Biography* in 1885, he expresses himself thus:

"The name of Ælfric has become famous from the vigour with which he opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. . . . One of his homilies, the sermon 'on the sacrifice,' for Easter Sunday, contains strong statements against the teaching of the Romish Church on the subject of the Eucharist. . . . As the homilies were accepted by Archbishop Sigeric, and Ælfric was employed by other Bishops, they may be held to express the teaching of the Church of England at this time, even though the writer was never a Bishop himself."

This, we venture to say, is an extreme and indefensible view. The writer allows that Ælfric "probably owed much to Ratramnus of Corbie," but this is a mild way of stating the fact, which Hopkins more than two centuries ago made evident by an elaborate presentment in parallel columns, that all the doctrinal portions of the homily in question are little more than a paraphrase of the tractate of Ratramnus. Moreover, Naegle, in his recent elaborate monograph on Ratramnus,\* has been enabled to prove, in our opinion conclusively, that Ratramnus' teaching, though liable to misinterpretation on the part of those who read into it the ideas of the reformers of the sixteenth century, was absolutely sound as to the fundamental fact of the Real Presence, and did not on this score incur the suspicion of his contemporaries. It would be superfluous here to retail anew the arguments developed by Dr Lingard and especially by Father Bridgett in the chapter here omitted. It will be sufficient to contrast the sentences just quoted from Mr Hunt's article in the *Dictionary* with the verdict expressed by the same writer in a more recent work of his, *The History of the English Church to the Norman Conquest* (1899):

"Ælfric also speaks elsewhere on this subject in the same strain as in his Easter homily. It is possible to reconcile his words with the present teaching of Rome; his expressions are loose and unphilosophical, and therefore capable of being interpreted according to demand. Yet it will scarcely be denied that their spirit, and indeed the obvious interpretation of them, are contrary to the doctrine of transubstantiation. At the same time, the contention that they represent the teaching of the Church of England before the Conquest can scarcely be maintained in the face of passages to be found in the works of Bede and elsewhere."

This last sentence, it will be noticed, offers an almost formal retraction of what Mr Hunt had said in his *Dictionary* article.]

## CHAPTER V. THE HOLY EUCHARIST DURING THE NORMAN PERIOD

THE Anglo-Saxon Church had no heresies to encounter; but in the very century in which England became the battlefield of Norman and Saxon, the Holy Eucharist had become the battlefield of faith and heresy, and the foremost champion of faith was Lanfranc, Abbot of Bec, who was shortly afterwards the first Archbishop of Canterbury of Norman appointment.

Although the conflict between Lanfranc and Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, preceded the residence of the former in England, it will not be out of place to give an outline at least of its nature.

\* Naegle, *Ratramnus und die Eucharistie*, 1903.

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It is well known how often Berengarius retracted his heresies and then relapsed into them. Coleridge sought to apologize for these vacillations:

Ye who, secure 'mid trophies not your own,  
Judge him who won them when he stood alone,  
And proudly talk of *recreant* Berengare—  
O first the age, and then the man compare!  
That age how dark! congenial minds how rare!  
No host of friends with kindred zeal did burn!  
No throbbing hearts awaited his return!  
Prostrate alike when prince and peasant fell,  
He only disenchanted from the spell,  
Like the weak worm that gems the starless night,  
Moved in the scanty circlet of his light:  
And was it strange if he withdrew the ray  
That did but guide the night-birds to their prey? \*

Such a conception of Berengarius is convenient for the Protestant theory, but it is ludicrously false when confronted with history. Judged by his own acts and words, and by the testimony of his contemporaries, he was a vain, courtly, scoffing, scholastic professor. He was rich, and gained over a considerable party of followers by distributing his gold and silver among needy scholars. He was blustering and abusive towards his adversaries when he could be so with safety to himself, but cowardly and hypocritical when there was any risk to be run.

When Lanfranc, of whom he was jealous, opposed him, he replied by ridiculing his vulgar stupidity. Lanfranc rejoined that "he would rather be a rude and ignorant Catholic with the multitude than with Berengarius try to be a courtly and witty heretic."† Berengarius abused Cardinal Humbert, who had presided at the council which condemned him, as a "Burgundian" (which it seems was then a term of contempt among scholastics). Lanfranc answered that Humbert was from Lorraine, not from Burgundy, but even were it otherwise it would be arrogance and folly to despise a man on account of his country, since the "Spirit breatheth where He will." "But it is your custom," he adds, "to make little of others, and much of yourself, and to boast in your self-conceit. You call yourself David, and Humbert Goliath. But you would have done better to call yourself Goliath for your great arrogance, and because your opinions, writings, and words are a sword with which you will be dispatched. Humbert, indeed, you might well call David, for he lived humbly, taught humbly and as a member of the Church, and in his battle for the Church took the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

The teaching of Berengarius, like that of most heretics, is itself a subject of dispute, since he was confused, vacillating, inconsequent and artful, especially in giving new interpretations to old words and formulæ. It was quite clear that he denied the Catholic faith as held in his own day, but by no means clear what he would substitute in its place. To the charge of contradicting the Catholic faith he made no other reply than that what his adversaries called the universal faith was in reality universal error, and not the real Catholic faith as taught by Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine.‡ He had been required to profess and swear that "the bread and wine after consecration are the Body and Blood of CHRIST." He did so, but gave to his profession a private meaning, which he knew was not that of those who required from him the declaration of faith; and afterwards, when reproached for his relapse, he denied that "he had ever

\**Poetical Works* S. T. Coleridge, vol. II, p. 88 (ed. 1828).

†"Mallem cum vulgo esse rusticus et idiota catholicus quam tecum existere curialis atque facetus hæreticus" (*De Corp. et Sang. Domini, Opera Lanf.*, tom. II, p. 156, ed. Giles).

‡*De Sacra Cæna*, p. 36.



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confessed or sworn to the common error of fools which you (Lanfranc) do not hesitate to call the common faith of the Church.”\*

On the other hand he says that at the time he was condemned at Vercelli, in 1050, he was condemned unjustly, since no one then knew his opinions; “indeed,” he adds, “I did not know them clearly myself as I do now, for I had not then suffered for them as I now have, nor so deeply studied the sacred Scriptures.”† It was, however, enough for the Pope to know that he taught a doctrine other than that of the Church, and it was of no importance, either then or now, to know what private fancies he elaborated. He certainly denied that consecration causes any change in the elements; and he affirmed that they are called the Flesh and Blood of CHRIST because by using them the Church celebrates the memory of our LORD’s crucified Body and Blood-shedding, and reminds us to crucify our flesh and its vices.

“If this were so,” said Lanfranc, “then the Jewish sacraments would be better than the Christian sacraments. The miraculous manna was certainly more admirable than mere bread and wine; and if the Eucharist is only a memorial of things past, then the paschal lamb and other Jewish types were more excellent; since it is a divine thing to foretell the future, but to recall the past does not exceed human power.”

“But, secondly, if the doctrine of Berengarius were true, then the universal Church would have erred, and if it erred, it must have perished, for nothing destroys souls like error.”

Lanfranc thus defines the Catholic doctrine: “We believe that the earthly substances which are consecrated by the priestly ministry on the LORD’s table are converted ineffably, incomprehensibly, marvellously, by the operation of divine power, into the essence of the LORD’s Body, the appearance, however, and some other qualities of the bread and wine remaining, lest the communicants should feel horror at receiving Flesh and Blood (*cruda et cruenta*), and also for the greater merit of believers. Nevertheless, the Body of the LORD remains in heaven at the right hand of the Father, immortal, inviolate, integral, incontaminate, unhurt. So that it may be truly said that we receive the very Body which was born of a Virgin, yet not that very Body. It is that very Body, if you consider its essence and the propriety and efficacy of its true nature. It is not the same, if you consider the appearance and the other qualities of bread and wine. This faith has been held from the beginning, and is still held by that Church which is called Catholic because it is spread throughout the world.”‡

Lanfranc follows Berengarius paragraph by paragraph, giving the true meaning of each passage of the Fathers that Berengarius had quoted, exposing his sophisms and replying to his objections. This he does with great force and acuteness. But he also reminds his opponent that the faith does not depend on these solutions. “In a matter of such depth,” he says, “you ought rather to pray GOD, either that you may understand what the human mind is able to understand, or that, without failing in your faith, you may humbly and patiently bear what exceeds the power of the human mind in this great secret, and what in this life cannot be comprehended. This you ought to do, and not to cause strife, to dissent from the universal Church, and excite a new schism by words and writings contrary to the precepts of the Holy Fathers.”§

The successor of Lanfranc both at Bec in Normandy and in the see of Canterbury was St Anselm. Like Lanfranc, he was Italian by birth, yet, as

\**Ib.*, p. 53.

†*Ib.*, p. 38.

‡*De Corp.*, tom. II, p. 187.

§*Ib.*, p. 193.

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he ruled the English Church, his writings may be quoted as English authorities, like those of St Theodore.

There are two letters of St Anselm on the Blessed Eucharist, giving its theology very fully. "Without any doubt," he says, "it is the true Body which was born of the Virgin Mary and rose from the tomb, and the very Blood which flowed from the side of that crucified Body. Those who pretend that after consecration it is bread materially, and the Body of the LORD figuratively only, are carnal and think carnally and err foolishly against the faith, trusting rather their bodily eyes than the words of Truth. Of course it is a figure in the sense that we do not see or taste what we believe to be present, for how could we eat the Flesh of the Lamb of God except by means of a sacrament? . . . According to the definitions of the Holy Fathers it is to be understood that the bread laid upon the altar is changed by those solemn words (of our LORD) into His Body, and that the substances of bread and wine do not remain, but the species remain, that is, the form, colour, and taste. It is, therefore, in these species that changes take place, not in the reality. Though the wicked do not receive the virtue of the sacrament, yet it must not be denied that they receive not only the species, but also the true substance of the Body of CHRIST. Some are shocked at this, but they ought to know that this sacrament is so august that a worthy place cannot add to its dignity, nor an unworthy one diminish it."\*

One of the assistants at the consecration of St Anselm was Herbert of Losinga, Bishop of Thetford (afterwards of Norwich). Some of his sermons have been preserved and lately published. In that for Easter Day, he thus speaks of the great Mystery of the Eucharist: "Brethren, we are to be fed with the Body of the LORD, and to be made to drink of His Blood. It is bread which you see before you, material bread; but when, in the office of the consecrating priest, we come to the words of CHRIST, that bread is made the Flesh of CHRIST, that very Flesh which proceeded from the Virgin, and hung upon the Cross, and lay in the sepulchre, and rose again from the sepulchre and which, not fantastically but substantially, was manifested to the eyes of the disciples, and now standeth incorruptible and immortal at the right hand of GOD. The same we assert, maintain, and preach concerning the liquor which is made the Blood of CHRIST. A great change of things; but to the word of GOD nothing is impossible. The word of GOD was able to make all things of nothing; and shall it not be able to make something of something? It was possible to the LORD to say: 'Let there be light,' and there was light; 'Let there be a firmament,' and it was made; 'Let there be dry land, let there be water,' and they were created; 'Let all creatures be,' and they were. And shall GOD say: 'Let bread become my Body, and the cup my Blood,' and shall it not be? Those things were possible to the word of GOD, and shall these things be impossible to the same word? Nay, the most impossible of things is that that should *not* be done which the word of GOD biddeth to be done. The reason of these things is searched for; but it is the highest reason to trust to the will and word of GOD, and in nowise to make search with fond inquisition into the hidden and secret work of GOD."†

Another early writer on the Eucharist was Robert Pully or Pulleyne, our first English cardinal, and the great promoter of studies at Oxford in the time of Henry I. We have of his a full treatise of theology, called the "Book of

\**Opera*, tom. II, pp. 163-165 (ed. Gerberon).

† Herbert de Losinga's *Letters and Sermons*, 2 vols, ed. by Dean Goulbourn and Canon Symonds



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Sentences.”\* In the eighth book he defends in the most explicit manner and accurately defines the mysteries of this sacrament. “The LORD by the power of His benediction, both in His own person converted, and now through His ministers converts, the bread into His Body and the wine into His Blood, so that neither the bread nor the wine remain what they were, but pass into another nature, the bread into flesh, the wine into blood.” He denounces consubstantiation (the doctrine afterwards maintained by Luther of the co-existence of bread and of our LORD’s Body). He shows that our LORD’s Body is not broken, though the species are broken, and that the accidents remain without their substance, while he guards against the thought that they inhere in the sacred Body and Blood. He denies that there is any delusion of the senses, since those judge only of the accidents.†

That exactly the same theology was taught at the same period in Scotland may be seen in the treatise of Adam Scot of the order of Premonstratensians or Norbertines, who was Bishop of Withern (Candida Casa) in Galloway in 1177. His words are as follows: “While the species of the bread is seen, its substance is not there; and the substance of CHRIST’s Body is really there, though its form appear not.”‡ He thus expresses himself as to the mode of the Presence: “The power of God can cause that one Body should be in different places at the same time, and the whole of the Body in every part of the outward species.”§

Another writer who may be considered a witness for the Scotch Church is St Aelred. He was born at Hexham, and brought up in the Scotch court of King David. He writes as follows: “What was the sign that the shepherds received? ‘You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.’ And this was to be the sign that He was the SAVIOUR, the CHRIST, the LORD! But what great thing is it to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, and to lie in a stable? It is a great thing if we only understand it. And we shall understand it, if we not only hear the message, but also have in our heart that light which shone round about the shepherds when the angels spoke. He appeared in the midst of splendour when first he told of the birth of CHRIST, that we may know that none can hear aright but those whose souls are illuminated by God.

“I could say many things about this ‘sign,’ but one must suffice. Bethlehem means the ‘house of bread.’ It represents the holy Church, in which the true Bread, the Body of CHRIST, is ministered. The manger in Bethlehem is the altar in the Church. . . . In this manger is JESUS, wrapped in swaddling clothes. The swaddling clothes are the sacramental veils (*tegumentum sacramentorum*). In this manger, under the appearances of bread and wine, are the true Body and Blood of CHRIST.|| There CHRIST Himself is believed to be, but wrapped in swaddling clothes, that is to say, invisible in the sacrament. We have no other so great and evident sign of the birth of CHRIST, as that we receive daily His Body and Blood at the holy altar; and that He who was once born for us of a virgin is daily immolated in our sight. Therefore, brethren, let us hasten to the manger of the LORD, first preparing ourselves by grace ‘in a pure heart and a good conscience

\* This is an earlier production than another treatise bearing the same title by Peter Lombard, and perhaps more vigorous and original, though for some reason less known and supplanted by Peter Lombard’s.

† Migne, *P. L.*, tom. CLXXXVI.

‡ “Ejusque et species apparet, cujus non est substantia, et latet substantia, cujus non apparet forma.”

§ Sicut in diversis locis potest esse unum, ita et in singulis partibus potest esse totum.” (*On the Tabernacle*, pt II, ch. x, p. 705. Migne, *P. L.*, tom. cxcviii.)

|| In Sermon II, col. 273, Aelred says: “Post consecrationem jam non est substantia panis et vini quod prius fuit, sed in veritate corpus Christi et sanguis.”

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and an unfeigned faith,' that associated with the angels we may sing 'Gloria in excelsis DEO.'""\*

A similar thought is thus developed by another writer of this century, Peter of Blois, who died Archdeacon of London in 1200: "In the hour when CHRIST was born, there were many rich men asleep, and some perhaps were awake and solicitous for the wisdom of this world. But CHRIST who has made foolish the wisdom of this world, and decreed to save the faithful by the folly of preaching, granted the vision of His angels and the song of glory and of praise at His birth not to the wise, not to philosophers, but to shepherds, to rustics, to the simple and the humble. 'I confess to Thee O Father, for Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto little ones.' And you, brethren, though you are not shepherds, yet you shall see that Little One, whom many kings and prophets desired to see, reposing to-day on the altar, not in His glory, but wrapped in swaddling clothes. For as in the time of His Nativity, His strength was truly present though hidden by those coverings, so is His Majesty now hidden in the Sacrament. But a day will come when He will appear, not clad in swaddling clothes, but clothed with light as with a vestment as the only begotten of the Father; as the King in his beauty; having His tabernacle in the sun, in the splendours of the saints, in the light that wanes not, in the glory that passes not away."†

These extracts from writers who all lived within the first century after the Norman Conquest, and long before the definition of transubstantiation by the general council of Lateran in 1215, will suffice to show how clear and precise was the theological teaching, how explicit the faith of the Anglo-Norman Church.

Let us now consider what is the bearing of this famous controversy on England. We have been told that Anglo-Saxon England had a view of its own regarding the Holy Eucharist, quite opposed to that of Lanfranc, Anselm and the Normans. This assertion has already, we think, been sufficiently refuted by means of purely native documents. But it is rendered still more paradoxical by the Berengarian controversy, and the arrival in England of the opponents of Berengarius.

Berengarius was reproached by one adversary after another for contradicting the universal belief. What was his answer? He appeals back to the fourth century, and ridicules the belief of his own day as universal stupidity. How gladly would he have replied that if Italy and France and Germany were against him, yet England at least was on his side. But this he did not say, nor was it said by any of his party. Yet there had been, especially since the early days of St Dunstan, much relation between England and the great monasteries in the North of France, and the faith of the English was well known on the continent.‡

And again, in the very heat of the controversy Lanfranc comes to England, and is placed over the English Church. He governs with a certain severity, and shows a certain contempt for the ignorance of the islanders. He deposes bishops and abbots. But when did he ever make a charge of heresy against any of them? Not one favourer of the Berengarian heresy is mentioned in English history. Resentment burned in English hearts against the Normans, and evil passions found an entrance even into cloisters. We hear of a feud that led to sacrilege and bloodshed in the church of Glastonbury between the Norman abbot and the Saxon monks;§ but its origin was the refusal of the monks

\* S. Aelred, Ser. 11; Migne, *P. L.*, tom. cxcv, col. 227.

† Peter of Blois, Sermon vi, *Bib. Max.*, tom. xxiv, p. 1085.

‡ Guitmund, one of the principal opponents of Berengarius, had lived in England. There is, therefore, special force in his assertion: "Berengarianam ple-

beculam nec unum solum regnum aliquo unquam tempore obtinuisse monstrari potest." And again: "Notissimum est hoc tempore priusquam Berengarius insanisset hujusmodi vesanias nunquam fuisse" (Migne, *P. L.*, cxxlix, p. 1487 and p. 1489).

§ See Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, iv, 394.



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to abandon their Gregorian *cantus*. What would it have been had they been required to change their faith in the Blessed Sacrament? Then, indeed, the English would have fought for their altars as well as for their hearths, and the name of Berengarius would have become a war-cry throughout the nation.

On the contrary, they heard the doctrine which they had always believed stated more lucidly and defended more acutely than it might have been in their native schools; but it had for them no novelty. An illustration of all this will be found in the life of St Wulstan.

St Wulstan had been appointed Bishop of Worcester by St Edward in 1062. He retained his bishopric under the primacy of Lanfranc and St Anselm till his death in 1095. He was a thorough Englishman, and no friend of the Normans, who had even meditated his deposition, but were deterred both by his reputation for sanctity and a miraculous occurrence. Yet this did not prevent St Wulstan cherishing the greatest esteem and affection for St Anselm, nor St Anselm from venerating St Wulstan. And the mere fact that the Anglo-



HAROLD SEEKING THE CHURCH AT BOSHAM  
(From the Bayeux Tapestry)

Norman Church procured the canonization of the Anglo-Saxon prelate would be proof enough, were none other forthcoming, that with regard to the Holy Eucharist, as well as all other matters, the teaching and practice of St Wulstan were the same as their own. But William of Malmesbury has left us some interesting details which show St Wulstan's special devotion to the Mass; and though he does not state the truism that the saint believed in transubstantiation, yet he certainly would not have praised him had it not been the case. He praises Wulstan because when a young priest he did not say Mass hastily and spend the rest of the day in amusement and self-indulgence (as was too frequently done by his fellow-countrymen). Wulstan said Mass devoutly, and spent much time afterwards in thanksgiving. When a bishop he sang Mass daily, and after his Mass recited many psalms and litanies of the saints; and whilst at Worcester he reserved to himself the solemn and late Mass in order to take his share in the burden of monastic offices. Moreover, he used to hear two Masses before singing his own. An interesting story of his conduct when abbot must be related in the very words of Malmesbury. "One day he was

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compelled to go early to the law courts, and therefore before he sang Mass he ordered his dinner to be prepared. The servant put a wild goose on the spit: meanwhile the priest stood at the altar with his usual devotion. The church was near the house, and the savory smell of the roasting goose was carried into it, and reached the nostrils of the celebrant while he was engaged in the silent part of the Mass, and caused him a distraction. He immediately recalled his mind, and tried to put away the temptation; but when it continued in spite of his efforts he grew angry with himself, and took an oath on the Sacrament which he held in his hand that he would never eat such kinds of food again. When Mass was over he left the house fasting, and from that day forward he did not touch flesh meat.”\*

Such, then, was the devotion of St Wulstan to the sacrifice of the altar. Now can anyone persuade himself that the faith of Wulstan when he said Mass in the days of William Rufus had undergone a change from that with which he went to the altar in the time of St Edward? If not, then the traditions of St Dunstan, of St Odo and of Ælfric were in perfect harmony with those of St Anselm and of Lanfranc. Wulstan was but one of the innumerable links between the two churches, or, to speak more correctly, between the two epochs before and after the Conquest, of the one Church of England, and between the two peoples, which after the Conquest worshipped in unity of faith before the same altars. It was the old English faith that St Margaret carried to Scotland, which was there also found to be identical with that which had come down from St Columba, and which, borne back to England by Margaret's daughter, the “good Queen Maud,” wife of Henry I., was recognized by St Anselm as that which he had first learnt in Italy and afterwards taught in Normandy.

Three centuries had yet to pass before a voice was raised in England calling in question this adorable mystery. How men treated it meanwhile, and how it became to them life or death according to their treatment, will form the subject of the following chapters.

## CHAPTER VI. THE HOLY EUCHARIST FROM THE NORMAN PERIOD TO THE REFORMATION

THERE remains one more section to be studied historically before we can retrace our steps and review the history of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain in its relation to the people. In 1327 England gave birth to Wycliffe, whose name will be ever specially associated with a fierce rejection of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

The continuator of a chronicle called the *Eulogium*, writing early in the fifteenth century, gives the following account of Wycliffe and his writings: “John Wycliffe taught at Oxford that the sacrament of the Eucharist is bread . . . and that this bread is the Body of CHRIST as the rock was CHRIST; yet the Body of CHRIST is there otherwise than in a sign, for it is there by grace, that sanctifies those that receive it worthily; but that no accident is there without a subject; and that Hugh of St Victor was the first who invented the term transubstantiation; and that the sacrament of the altar is not an accident but a substance, otherwise common bread would be more excellent than the sacrament of the altar, for substance of any kind is more excellent than any accident whatever;

\**Vita*, apud Boll. die Jan. 19.



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and that the contrary cannot be proved from Scripture; and that all the doctors of the first thousand years after CHRIST, during which, as the Apocalypse says, Satan was bound, thus thought of the sacrament; and that now Satan is unbound, and has deceived the nations in the faith of the sacrament; and lastly, that that holy bread ought not to be regarded as bread, but as the Body of CHRIST in memory of our LORD's Passion.

"His disciples," continues this writer, "preached and spread this doctrine throughout all England, seducing many of the laity, even noblemen and great lords, who took the defence of these false preachers. But the masters in theology teaching in Oxford decided against this doctrine, and especially the regents of the Friars Minor confuted its teachers powerfully, and proved that they were Lollards." \*

The summary of Wycliffe's teaching on the Eucharist here given is not unfair to him, yet it would give the reader, who might chance to be ignorant of Wycliffe and his times, but little idea of the origin of his errors, their importance, or the sources of their great influence on his own and later generations. † That influence was in no way due to any positive teaching on the subject of the Eucharist, for his admirers are not agreed as to his system of belief. ‡ His strength, like that of most heretics, was in negation; and though he neither attacked the doctrine of sacrifice, nor the discipline of the Church in administering communion under one species, yet his disciples quickly drew the logical consequences involved in his denial of transubstantiation.

Wycliffe died at the end of 1384, and it was not until 1381, when he was fifty-seven years old, that he began publicly to deny the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. During those three years, however, his activity was incessant, and it was all directed against that doctrine. "In all his writings," says Lechler, "from 1381 onwards, in Latin and English, learned and popular, also in his sermons, Wycliffe continually refers to this doctrine, which had now become the hinge or pole of all his thoughts, and he lives in the conviction that for this righteous contention, when this brief poor life is over, the LORD in His mercy will most bounteously reward him." §

It will be worth our while to study the history of this tardy but sudden and complete change in Wycliffe's views. Most Protestant writers, taking little heed of dates, have treated this denial of transubstantiation as the gradual but necessary and logical result of his earlier struggles against practical abuses. According to them, his keen sense of the corruption of clergy and laity in the fourteenth century caused him to examine more jealously the foundation of Catholic dogma, and his moral insight discovered in the Real Presence the source of all the prevailing evils. ||

\* *Eulogium*, III, 350. The last phrase proves that Lollards was a generic term for heretics, and already in use before the time of Wycliffe. The derivation of the word from *lolium* (tares or cockle sown among the wheat) is not improbable; but it is more generally supposed to be of German origin, and to mean psalm-singers, or babblers.

† There are many lives of Wycliffe in English. What follows is mainly based on a translation by Dr Lorimer of the German work of Professor Lechler, *John Wiclif and his English Precursors* (Kegan Paul & Co.), a book with a foolish title, since the author is compelled to admit that Wycliffe really had no English precursors. [Although much new material has been rendered accessible in print by the publications of the Wyclif Society, the Early English Text Society, etc.,

Lechler's book still remains the best Protestant biography. But see Father Stevenson's *The Truth about John Wyclif*: Lond., Burns & Oates, 1885.]

‡ Wycliffe taught consubstantiation when he first began to deny the Catholic doctrine. Dr Lechler says that this was "transitional," and that his ultimate doctrine was that of Calvin—a virtual presence of our Lord's Body (*i.e.*, without metaphor, of grace purchased by His Body), and this presence is due, not to consecration, but to the faith of the communicant (II, 177, 184, 189, 192, 195). This is also the testimony of Waldensis, who says he taught the same doctrine as Berengarius, but not so boldly (*De Euchar.*, cap. 19).

§ Lechler, II, 202 (Eng. Transl.).

|| This is Dr Vaughan's view in his monograph.

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The upholders of this view of Wycliffe's career are however quite unable to give a plausible explanation why it was only just at the close of his life that Wycliffe discovered the evils of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. We can understand a man of corrupt or worldly life holding to a false doctrine until he is converted to seriousness or purity, and then rejecting it energetically. We can understand a religiously-minded man, like Saul of Tarsus, clinging to a false or imperfect system until suddenly aroused by revelation to see the delusion of his mode of life. Or, lastly, we can understand a really virtuous man holding some inherited error of little importance or practical effect, or even defending eagerly an error because of its supposed connexion with a great truth. But the case of Wycliffe, as related by his modern partisans, is analogous to none of these. According to them he had been battling for years against abuses. He had long been an earnest, enlightened man; no sudden conversion aroused him, no external revelation was granted him, yet he quite suddenly discovered that a doctrine in which he had suspected no evil was a monstrous and unmitigated mischief. Let us listen to one of his biographers, who has given great attention to this part of his subject. "We are able," writes Professor Lechler, "to prove that Wycliffe for a long time did not stumble at all at the doctrine of transubstantiation, but received it in simple faith in common with other doctrines of the mediæval Church." \* "It is certain," he says in another place, "that up till 1378 Wycliffe was still attached without any misgiving to the doctrine of the Mass. We have now two certain dates, the year 1378 and the year 1381. At the former date Wycliffe still adhered to the scholastic doctrine of transubstantiation with unbroken confidence; at the latter date he already enters into public conflict with the same doctrine with entire decision." †

Now having made this sudden discovery, in what terms did Wycliffe speak of his former error? "He affirms," says Lechler, "that the so-called Christians who take to be their God that 'accident' which they see in the hands of the priest at Mass, sin worse than the heathen who in their fetish worship give divine honours throughout the day to whatever object they chance first to see in the early morning." ‡

"The indignation of Wycliffe against the idolatry committed in the worshipping of the Host," says the same writer, "is all the stronger that he cannot avoid the conviction that the authors of this deification of a creature are perfectly well aware of what their God really is. Such priests accordingly he does not scruple to call plainly Baal-priests." § If Wycliffe did not scruple to call Bede and Dunstan and Anselm and Edmund by such opprobrious names, one would have thought that his biographer would have felt some necessity of apologising for him, seeing that he had himself recorded that Wycliffe had only just ceased to share their error. He "could not avoid the conviction," forsooth, that they were all conscious hypocrites and impostors, and yet two years before he had held the very same doctrine with "simple faith," "without any misgiving," with "unbroken confidence" !

Now let it be well remarked that in Wycliffe's attacks on the Catholic doctrine, it is the doctrine itself that constitutes the crime of those who uphold it, not its moral consequences. He accuses Catholic worshippers of immorality, but their immorality consists in their false worship. "Towards Francis of Assisi and Dominic and the Orders founded by them, he continued," says Lechler, "to cherish and express all manner of respect and sincere recogni-

\* Lechler, II, 173.

† *Ib.*, 175.

‡ *Ib.*, II, 182.

§ *Ib.*



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tion.”\* How long did he continue to do this? Until the mendicant orders opposed his new teaching on the Eucharist.† From that time he poured out the vials of his wrath upon them. He had seen no evil consequences flowing from their worship of the Blessed Sacrament until it pleased him suddenly to call it idolatry. Then he wrote: “I maintain that, among all the heresies which have ever appeared in the Church, there was never one which was more cunningly smuggled in by hypocrites than this, or which in more ways deceives the people; for it plunders the people, leads them astray into idolatry, denies the teaching of Scripture, and by this unbelief provokes the Truth Himself oftentimes to anger.”‡

Those who approve this language should, for mere consistency, admit that its condemnations fall on Wycliffe himself, and that he was an idolater, a denier of Scripture, a provoker of God’s anger, until the last three years of his life. If they are unwilling to say this, they must admit that he was an intemperate zealot. Indeed this character is not denied him by some of his admirers. If J. R. Green gives him credit for “spotless purity,” he admits no less his “unconquerable pride,” and calls him “a master of popular invective,” and “an audacious partisan.”§ “Whatever other Christian qualities there may be in his writings,” says the author of a notice in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, “there is at least very little of Christian meekness or charity. His intolerance and violence, and often his coarseness of invective, are unmeasured.”

The inconsistency of Wycliffe as well as of some of his biographers may be seen very strikingly in their treatment of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln. This great man is most commonly known for his energetic resistance to abuses, and above all for the famous appeal to CHRIST against what he believed to be the support given by the Sovereign Pontiff to those abuses. For this he has been often claimed by Protestants as a forerunner of men like Luther and Cranmer. More cautious and impartial writers admit the folly of such a claim, and readily acknowledge that Grosseteste was a thorough Catholic.|| In spite of this, Professor Lechler has classed him among the precursors of Wycliffe. “As Protestants,” he says, “we have a right and a duty to hold in honour the memory of a man like Grosseteste. *His creed indeed was not the pure confession of the Evangelical churches*; but his fear of God was so earnest and upright, his zeal for the glory of God was so glowing, his care for the salvation of his own soul and of the souls committed to him by virtue of his office was so conscientious, his faithfulness so approved, his will so energetic, his mind so free from man-fearing and man-pleasing, his bearing so inflexible and beyond the power of corruption—that his whole character constrains us to the sincerest and deepest veneration.”¶ All this is perfectly true, and it is creditable to Professor Lechler to have written it. Yet it does not in any way establish his right *as a Protestant* to honour Grosseteste, or to name him among Wycliffe’s precursors. If those who make light of all dogmatic belief choose to place both the Catholic Bishop of Lincoln and the heretical Rector of Lutterworth in their Walhalla, on account of their moral qualities, I cannot complain of their inconsistency, though I must still dispute Wycliffe’s claim to virtues like those which belonged indisputably to Grosseteste. Yet it should be remembered by all that neither Grosseteste nor Wycliffe in any

\* *Ib.*, i, 86, ii, 3.

† *Ib.*, ii, 290, and Dr Lorimer’s note, i, 250.

‡ In *Trialogo*.

|| See the Introduction by the Rev. H. Luard to the edition of Grosseteste’s Letters in the Rolls Series

¶ *John Wiclif and his English Precursors*, i, 54.

§ *History of the English People*, by J. R. Green, M.A. vol. i, p. 446.

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way held the views of modern liberals. Utterly different as they were in their creeds, both insisted on the importance of a right creed. And—to confine ourselves to the matter of the Holy Eucharist—Wycliffe, as we have just been told, spoke of those who held the doctrine of transubstantiation as “priests of Baal.” Grosseteste, on the contrary, looked on those who denied transubstantiation as heretics. Wycliffe considered that this belief brought upon its holders the anger of God, Grosseteste that it was in itself a homage to God’s veracity, and that it gave those who held it a most powerful means of propitiating God’s mercy. Wycliffe thought the doctrine so detestable that his whole attitude of mind was changed towards its defenders. He had revered and cherished the friars for their moral and religious virtues so long as he himself held the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. But their one sin—the sin of not changing as he did and of resisting his change—cancelled all their virtues and made them enemies of God and man. Grosseteste, on the contrary, considered that a lively faith in transubstantiation, and a lively sense of the condescension and love of God in residing personally amongst us in this Sacrament, are the most powerful motives and means of sanctification. This being the case, I can see nothing but inconsistency in Professor Lechler’s praise of Grosseteste, with the mere parenthetical reserve implied in the words, “His creed, indeed, was not the pure confession of the Evangelical churches.” Is this exception insignificant or not? If it is, then Professor Lechler should have given Wycliffe less praise for opposing so harmless a creed as that of Grosseteste. If it is not insignificant, then he should have given Grosseteste less credit for his holy life; or he should at least have explained how it is that the holiness of his life was in no way affected by his energetic and, so to say, passionate belief in a doctrine which his hero, Wycliffe, denounced as so monstrous.

These considerations affect our estimate of Wycliffe no less than that of his biographer. For Wycliffe had always made much of the authority of Grosseteste. “Lincolniensis”—for by this name he was known among scholastics—is always mentioned by Wycliffe with honour until his own change of views.\* He was familiar with his writings and could not be ignorant of his faith and devotion as regards the Holy Eucharist. Yet this knowledge did not in any way restrain him from denouncing in the language we have heard not only that faith itself, but all who held it.

I conclude therefore that it is contrary to the facts of history to represent Wycliffe’s views as the gradual growth of a candid and faithful soul honestly seeking after truth. It is also contrary to facts to trace his sudden change to a discovery of any supposed connection between Catholic belief and practical abuses. The belief itself in the eyes of Wycliffe was the practical abuse.

I may be excused from investigating minutely what were the real causes of Wycliffe’s hostility to transubstantiation, since it would be necessary for this purpose to enter more fully into his previous life, and his writings and character, than my space will allow. Waldensis is probably right in attributing his change partly to his false philosophical views, and partly to his general hostility to the Church.† Perhaps it might be more correctly said that his hostility to the Church prepared his mind for the suggestions of the father of lies, and that the enemy of souls and of truth took occasion of his pride of metaphysical subtlety to suggest doubts and objections to which he willingly listened. Certainly his opposition took a philosophical form. Canon Simmons says that in

\* Lechler, I, 28.

† *De Euchar.*, cap. 17, n. 6.



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respect to the doctrine of the Eucharist "it was not the Presence that was in dispute so much as the scholastic explanations which were put forward to account for it, and the logical consequences which were supposed to be involved in it."\* Wycliffe's determined follower, Lord Cobham, was willing to say: "I believe that the most worshipful sacrament of the altar is CHRIST's Body in form of bread, the same Body that was born of the blessed Virgin our Lady St Mary,"† yet he obstinately refused to affirm transubstantiation. He contended that "as CHRIST while living on earth had both divinity and humanity, but the divinity veiled and invisible beneath the humanity, so in the sacrament of the altar is a true Body and true bread, the bread which we see and the Body of CHRIST veiled beneath it which we do not see."‡ Canon Simmons also speaks of "the scholastic subtleties which cost Lord Cobham his life."§ But it should be added that it was not the Church only that judged these scholastic subtleties to be important. Lord Cobham would not have been asked to affirm them had not Wycliffe put the whole strength of his cause in the rejection of them. The words "consubstantial" and "hypostatic union" may also be called scholastic subtleties, yet when by means of their denial heretics sought to reject our LORD's Divinity the Church was obliged to require a more precise profession of faith than had been necessary before the rise of heresy. So, under cover of rejecting definitions of schoolmen, Wycliffe was introducing a denial of our LORD's presence in the Holy Eucharist. Had the English bishops not been already aware of the importance of the doctrine of transubstantiation as the true and only intelligible mode of the Real Presence, they would have discovered its importance by the very vehemence of Wycliffe's hatred. Why such frenzy against a mere scholastic subtlety? Why accuse men of idolatry and fetishism if there was no substantial difference of belief? Waldensis was then right in affirming that Wycliffe was in reality a pure Berengarian, although he sought by certain logical additions to hide his heresy and make it sound less openly uncatholic.||

To sum up—Wycliffe was proud of his skill in scholastic discussions. He had unbounded confidence in his own judgement. Whatever seemed to him true for the time was to him all important, though he had never seen its importance previously. Whoever disagreed with him was an enemy of God and of Scripture. By the most frivolous interpretation of Scripture, of which his friends are now ashamed, he had declared the Church to have been governed by the HOLY GHOST for a thousand years, and since then to have fallen under the power of the Evil one. This he had maintained merely that he might be at liberty to criticise and blame. His spirit of hatred and his boldness in blasphemy grew always stronger and stronger. I by no means deny that he attacked much that was really evil. But he did it, not like Grosseteste, distinguishing what was of God and what was of man. He was not moved by charity, but by bitter zeal, and thus he blamed without discretion. To a mind like his it was easy for Satan to suggest doubts about the Real Presence, just as in the present day he would lead a proud and morose priest to doubt our LORD's Divinity, the eternity of hell, or the existence of God. I consider it therefore merely accidental on Wycliffe's side that in his late years he embraced a new error regarding the Eucharist, but the intensity with which he defended it when once embraced was in harmony with his previous life. "These men find fault with everything," wrote a contemporary of Wycliffe concerning the Lollards, in the very year 1381, in which Wycliffe first spoke against the Eucharist. "Nothing can please them. They

\* *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 226, note 4.

† *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, p. 439 (Rolls Series)

‡ *Ib.*, p. 444.

|| *De Euchar.*, cap. 19.

§ *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 121.

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blame the secular clergy because they hold benefices, the monks because they have property in common, the friars because they observe rigid poverty. They care not how often they contradict themselves. If they applaud it is not from joy, if they lament it is not from sorrow: every judgement is due to hatred alone."

Non curant quam contrariam  
De rebus dent sententiam,  
Et dissonum iudicium;  
In plausu non lætitiā,  
In planctu non tristitiā  
Monstrant, sed solum odium.\*

So far as I can read history, this estimate of Wycliffe and his followers is perfectly correct. Neither in his life nor writings can I find anything but rancour and bitter zeal. And his influence over the men of his own day was obtained by appeals not to faith or charity, but to pride and hatred. He called on the nobles to deprive the Church of her property, though I do not see that he resigned any of his own benefices.† He denounced the worldliness of the clergy, yet he allied himself with the most worldly and worthless of political parties, "the brutal and greedy baronage under John of Gaunt, eager to drive the prelates from office and to seize on their wealth."‡ Wycliffe never deluded himself so as to believe that John of Gaunt was a lover of truth, even as he understood truth, yet he took him for his friend and protector, knowing the immorality of his life, and the pride and avarice which alone induced him to lend his aid to the Lollards. With this man by his side Wycliffe appeared before William Courtenay, bishop of London, who had summoned him on a purely spiritual charge; and when the insolent prince threatened to drag the bishop out of the church by the hair of his head we hear of no protest made by Wycliffe, nor any cessation of friendship between the priest and his sacrilegious patron. Professor Lechler observes, however, that "to Wycliffe himself it *must have been* a source of sincere pain that he should have been the occasion of such a scene, and that too in a consecrated place."§ But Wycliffe's reverence for consecrated places is as mythical as his "sincere pain."

Wycliffe accused Catholic priests of being hypocrites in adoring the Most Holy Sacrament. Yet when he had ceased to believe with the Church he did not consider it safe to change his external demeanour. He continued therefore to kneel at the elevation of the Host, while he tried to save his heretical conscience, or rather his reputation for consistency, by protesting in some of his writings that "if he conformed himself to the custom of the Church it was only in the sense of addressing his devotion to the glorified body of CHRIST which is in heaven."|| Professor Lechler, who gives these facts without a word of censure, does not remark how easily the millions of Christian martyrs might have saved their lives had they been willing to burn incense before idols, with a protest made privately to their friends of their interior intention.

The death of Wycliffe is thus related by the same writer: "After having suffered for two years from the effects of a paralytic stroke, on Innocents' Day of the year 1384, while hearing Mass in his parish church at Lutterworth, Wycliffe sustained a violent stroke at the moment of the elevation of the host, and sank down

\* *Political Songs*, ed. by Mr Wright (Rolls Series).

† [This is not quite correct. Wycliffe seems to have exchanged the vicarage of Fillingham for the benefice of Ludgershall (*Lincoln Registers*, Institutions, Buckingham, fo. 419) and to have resigned the living of Ludgershall when he accepted the rectory of Lutterworth (*Patent Rolls*, 48 Edward III, pt. 1, memb. 23).

None the less it is certain that Wycliffe at least on two occasions applied to Rome for licence to retain one living while accepting another. See *Calendar of Papal Letters*, Bliss and Twemlow, iv, 193; and cf. *Petitions to the Pope*, 1, p. 390.]

‡ Green's *Short History*, p. 231.

§ Lechler, 1, 260. || *Ib.* II, 182.



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on the spot. His tongue in particular was affected by the seizure, so that from that moment he never spoke a single word more, and remained speechless till his death, which took place on Saturday evening—Sylvester's Day—on the eve of the Feast of CHRIST's Circumcision. This declaration, the aged priest, John Horn, who must have been a young man of three-and-twenty in the year of Wycliffe's death, confirmed with an oath to Dr Gascoigne, and it is also entirely credible in every respect." \* Of course, Professor Lechler and those who think with him see in this no judgement of God. Yet if those who love the Holy Mass esteem it a precious grace to receive their summons into the unveiled Presence, while celebrating or assisting at the sacred mysteries, nothing can be conceived more awful than for a blaspheming tongue to be struck dumb, and a body accustomed to bend in hypocrisy to fall powerless, at the moment of that solemn ceremony by which Catholics are wont to make reparation for impiety.

I have attributed the success of Wycliffe to his impassioned appeals to the spirit of pride and hatred to which the condition both of the Church and the world in the fourteenth century gave great force. It will be enough to remind the reader how the long residence of the Popes at Avignon had made them unpopular with the English during the French wars; and that the Great Schism, which still further weakened their influence in England, began just when Wycliffe was spreading his heresies. England too, though gaining empty glory on the continent by great victories, and at home intoxicated with vanity and ambition, was never more wretched or more divided. There was, however, still one faith in the country held alike by king, by baron, and by bondsman, and had Wycliffe been a man of God like St Bernardine of Siena, by appealing to that faith he might have done much to heal the miseries of the times. There was one great bond of men's hearts unbroken. It was the Holy Eucharist. All men worshipped at the same altar, fed on the same Flesh and Blood of the Lamb of God. What might not a saint have done by energetic and impassioned appeals to faith, love, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament! But, alas for the sins of England! no great apostolic saint was given her in those days; but, instead of a saint, Wycliffe and his followers were allowed to stir up bitterness and strife, and to do so, above all, by making of the sacrament of unity their principal weapon of hatred and division.

The nature and consequences of Wycliffe's teaching soon became more and more clear. It was proved that Bishop Courtenay and Archbishop Arundel had not been defending scholastic subtleties merely in condemning Wycliffe's propositions. His followers threw off the thin disguise their master had worn. Bishop Pecock tells us that in the middle of the fifteenth century the frenzy of the Lollards in England against the Holy Eucharist knew no bounds. "The sacraments," he says, "some of the lay people hold to be points of witchcraft and blindings brought into Christian men by the fiend, and the antichrist and his limbs. And in special they abhor above all other the highest and worthiest sign and sacrament of all other, the Sacrament of the Altar, the precious Body and Blood of CHRIST, for us hanged on the cross and for us outshed; insomuch that they not only scorn It, but they hate It, miscall It by foul names, and will not come into the bodily church while that Sacrament is hallowed, treated and used in the Mass."†

How had the English people, once so united in faith, come to this deplorable state? William of Newborough, whom I have quoted elsewhere,‡ testified that at the end of the twelfth century, no heresy had ever found entrance into

\* Lechler, II, 290.

† Pecock's *Repressor*, p. 563 (Rolls Series).

‡ See vol. I, p. 134.

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Britain since it came to be called England. "In all the writings of Wycliffe," says Professor Lechler, "which I have searched through in manuscript, I have never come upon a single trace to indicate that either in his own time or in earlier centuries heretics of any kind had made their appearance in England."\* Wycliffe, then, has the undisputed claim to be the father of heresy, strife and anarchy in England. He was not satisfied, like Berengarius, with getting the reputation of a subtle disputant in the schools. He sought, as Berengarius had never done, to propagate his opinions. He surrounded himself with disciples called "poor priests," who were to spread his heresies throughout the country. And this they did by preaching, not only in churches, but in churchyards, streets, gardens and private houses. Their sermons were principally invectives. Knyghton tells us that when William of Swinderby, one of these apostles of hatred, preached against women, "they were on the point of stoning him; when he preached against the merchants, he nearly drove them to despair; but when he preached against the priests the people were delighted, and said they had never listened to such a preacher." No doubt such readiness to listen to invectives against priests showed that there was already much evil—that, whether the fault was on the side of the laity or the clergy, or on both sides, love was dead, and reverence had not survived. From the malice against priests thus stirred up came contempt and hatred of their ministry, and especially of the great Sacrament in which consists their highest dignity and glory. So that our Divine LORD might say in truth of His clergy what He said by the Psalmist of His heavenly Father: *Opprobria exprobrantium tibi ceciderunt super me*. The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me.

Ten years after the death of Wycliffe the fanaticism of the Lollards emboldened them to present a petition to Parliament, which, though then rejected, is remarkable as being the first mention in that assembly of a heresy which was in course of centuries to be adopted by it as a test of the allegiance to the Crown and Protestant Church. "The false Sacrament of bread," says this petition, "leads all men, with a few exceptions, into idolatry; for they think that the Body of CHRIST, which is never out of heaven, is, by virtue of the priest's words, essentially enclosed in a little bread, which they show to the people."† There was much corruption of morals, much scepticism in England at that time among the higher classes, much misery and ignorance in the lower orders, yet the nation was not yet prepared to reject the faith of centuries and cut itself off from Christendom. There was a sturdy, common-sense view which prevailed over the metaphysical subtleties of Wycliffe, and which is thus exposed by Netter: "Are then all infidels who are not Wycliffites? All—Greeks, Illyrians, Spaniards, French, Indians, Hungarians, Danes, Germans, Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, English, Irish, Scotch—all the innumerable priests and bishops throughout the world—all blind, all infidels? And has the whole Church throughout the world now at length to learn from this John Wicked-life‡ what CHRIST meant in the Gospel when He gave His Body in the Eucharist? And did CHRIST thus leave His spouse, the Church of the whole world, deprived of the possession of the true faith, in order to cleave to this Wycliffian harlot? Surely the portentous ambition of this new sect is alone deserving of eternal punishment. You wretched, deluded men, does it really seem to you a trifle to believe in CHRIST as you profess to do, and to disbelieve in His Church? To

\* Lechler, I, 73.

† Wilkins, III, 221.

‡ "A Joanne, cognomento impiæ vitæ." If my translation is correct, this pun on Wycliffe's name

must have been well known in England, since the Latin would convey no meaning to any but an Englishman.



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believe in CHRIST the Head, and to sever from Him His mystic Body? To begin the Creed with 'I believe in God,' and to terminate your counter-creed with 'I deny the Catholic Church'?"\*

I do not propose to enter any further into the history of Lollardry. Wycliffe may have been "The First Protestant," as J. R. Green calls him, and the Lollard negations may have prepared the way for the wider and ever-widening negations called by the general name of Protestantism, but I can see no proof in Wycliffe's success of the intellectual, moral, or spiritual power which it has of late years been the fashion to claim for him. Success in destruction requires no great gifts, but a combination of untoward circumstances. The torch of the incendiary is a vile instrument, yet applied to inflammable materials, and aided by a strong wind, it may burn down a great city which it required centuries to build. So has it ever been in the history of GOD's church. St James has described the tongue of the heresiarchs, of those who would be "many masters." "The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold a small fire what a great wood it kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members which defileth the whole body, and inflameth the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell." It is the credulity of the people in lending ear to any false CHRIST or false prophet who comes in his own name which gives the power and popularity to leaders like Wycliffe. "Alexander the coppersmith has done me much evil," said St Paul; and the acknowledgement is full of humiliation, not to the Apostle, but to his disciples, and of instruction to ourselves. Coppersmiths like Alexander, fabricators of doctrines as well as of pots, are received as prophets, while men who have been rapt into the third heaven, and have proved their mission by a thousand miracles, are reviled as impostors.†

St Augustine has admirably contrasted the caution of the Church with the rash credulity of heretics in listening to those who claim to speak in God's name. "St Paul," he says, "when he received his vocation from heaven after our LORD's Ascension, would not have been believed by the Church, had he not found Apostles still living with whom he communicated, and, by comparing his Gospel with theirs, proved that he belonged to the same society. Then, when the Church found that he taught what the other Apostles also taught, and was living with them in communion and unity, and working miracles like them, then indeed, when the LORD thus bore witness to him, he gained authority, and now his words were listened to in the Church, as CHRIST is believed to speak by him. And yet," continues St Augustine, "the Manichæans think that the Church of CHRIST must believe in them, coming as they do, no one knows how, out of Persia, two hundred years and more after the Apostles, and claiming to speak in opposition to the Scriptures, which, with all the weight of apostolic authority, warn us that if any one bring any new doctrine besides that which we have received, he is to be anathema."‡

After quoting this passage, Waldensis makes on it the following reflection: "What then would Augustine think of men foolish enough to believe in a man who turns up in Britain, nearly fourteen hundred years after the Apostles, and undertakes to tell us, contrary to the teaching of all saints and doctors and the whole Catholic Church, what was the meaning of our LORD's words? O foolish sheep to desert their shepherds in order to run after the howling of this wolf!"§

\* Thomas Netter (Waldensis), *Doctrinale Fidei*, III, 35. † I think the remark is M. Louis Veuillot's, but I know not where to look for it.

‡ S. Aug., *Contra Faustum*, lib. xxviii, cap. iv.

§ *Doctr. Fid.*, III, 15.

# PART THE SECOND

## THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

### CHAPTER I. THE MASS-PRIEST

THE Catholic clergy as a body has conferred upon it by the great High Priest His own threefold powers called *Magisterium*, *Ministerium* and *Imperium*, the power to teach, to minister and to rule. The power of *Ministerium* is alone considered here, and no other ministry than that of the Holy Eucharist, the most sublime and distinctive of all the functions of the priesthood. The power to change bread and wine into our LORD's Body and Blood, and to offer the holy sacrifice, was believed by the Anglo-Saxons to be conferred by ordination on the priesthood, and it belonged to no lower grade amongst the clergy. We find the ambition of deacons suppressed by councils when they sought to usurp other functions of the priesthood, such as imposing penance and even hearing confessions, but I remember no example in England of a deacon claiming to say Mass. They were allowed, however, in the absence of a priest, to distribute Holy Communion which a priest had consecrated.

The name by which the priest was known was sometimes *sacerd* (a mere adaptation of the Latin *sacerdos*) and sometimes *preost* (which is also generally taken to be an adaptation of the Latin *presbyter*). But *preost* was a name given also to the minor clergy, and was a generic designation like our clergy or clergyman. Hence we find Ælfric saying: "To priests of common order it is allowed that they may chastely enjoy wedlock. But to others who serve at GOD's altar, that is to mass-priests and deacons, all such intercourse is wholly forbidden." When the grade of priesthood was specially designated, the clergyman was called *mæsse-preost* (mass-priest), or *mæsse-thegn* (mass-thane), or even altar-thane.

The priest represented our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech." It is interesting to read in the pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York in the eighth century, how the various orders of the clergy were understood to participate in our LORD's priesthood. I translate literally, omitting only a few unimportant phrases: "CHRIST was a *Porter* (*ostiarius*) when He shut and opened the ark of Noe, and opened the gates of hell. Wherefore now those who are called porters have charge of the doors of the church and sacristy, and ring the bell to call all men to the church. CHRIST was a *Reader* (*lector*) when He opened the book of Isaias the prophet; He was an *Exorcist* when He cast the seven devils out of Mary Magdalen; He was a *Subdeacon* when He blessed water at Cana and changed it into wine. The subdeacon must read the epistle, clothe and decorate the altars, and minister to the deacon. CHRIST was a *Deacon* when He broke the loaves to feed the multitudes, and washed the feet of His disciples; for the deacon must minister at the altar, read the gospel in the church, baptize and give communion in the absence of the priest, wash the feet of pilgrims (or strangers), and bury the dead. CHRIST was a *Priest* (*presbyter*) when He took bread and the chalice into His sacred hands, and, looking up to heaven to GOD the FATHER, blessed them, giving thanks. Now a presbyter (or elder) is thus called not on account of age, but of merit and wisdom. It is the duty of the priest to bless, to offer



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(sacrifice), to preside well, to preach, to baptize, and to give communion, for he is above the other degrees and holds the place of the bishop in the Church. CHRIST was a *Bishop* when, raising His hands, He blessed His apostles before His ascension. A bishop must judge and interpret (the law), consecrate and perfect, ordain, offer and baptize. The word bishop means overseer, because he ought to see over and set in order everything.”\*

In this enumeration the grade of acolyte, the highest of the four minor orders, is omitted, but this is probably a mistake of the copyist, for the form is given for his ordination. The cruet was given to him “to pour out wine for the Eucharist of the Body of CHRIST.” The bishop gave the subdeacon the empty chalice and paten and maniple. To the deacon he gave chasuble, poderis, alb, stole, girdle and amice; a stole over his left shoulder, and the book of the gospels. He also imposed hands on him, and anointed his hands with holy oil and chrism. The priest had the stole placed over both shoulders, and both the bishop and all the assisting priests held their hands over him. He prayed that GOD would pour His blessing on him, that he might keep pure and immaculate the gift of His ministry and, for the service of GOD’s people, transform (i.e., consecrate by transforming) bread and wine into the Body and Blood of His immaculate SON. When the bishop placed the chasuble on the priest, he prayed the FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST to bless him, “that he might be blessed in his priestly order, and offer atoning sacrifices for the people’s sins.” When his hands were anointed the bishop again prayed that the hands might “be sanctified to consecrate the sacrifices (*hostias*) which are offered for the sins and negligences of the people.” His head also was anointed with holy oil, but not with chrism.

Thus it appears that the offering of Holy Mass was considered the characteristic and highest function of the priesthood. And as this power could only be received by valid ordination, great care was always taken that no doubtfully ordained priest should be permitted to celebrate at the altar. In the “Dialogue” of St Egbert, Archbishop of York,† written between 732 and 766, it is said that “wandering priests or those ordained doubtfully,‡ without commendatory letters, and passing from province to province, are nowhere to be allowed to minister or to give sacraments, without the knowledge of the bishop of the place. Necessary sustenance may be given them, but they must not be admitted to the ministry of sacred things without the greatest discretion.” And in the Province of Canterbury a similar precaution was adopted in 816 by the Council of Celchyth. “No Scot” (i.e., Irish priest, whether coming from Ireland or from North Britain) “was to be allowed to administer sacraments or to say Mass;” and this, not because there was any hostility between the nations, much less any discord or schism between the churches, but, as it is immediately stated, “because it is unknown to us where they have been ordained, or if they have been ordained at all.”§

The mass-priest might be either a monk, a canon regular or a secular. Until the invasion of the Danes at the beginning of the ninth century, probably the greater number of the priests were monks. Monks became missionaries through the country parts, and often it was one of their number who was made the per-

\*Egbert’s *Pontifical* was published by the Surtees Society in 1853. [We cannot be quite sure that all the contents of this book are really coeval with the time of Egbert, for we only possess a copy of it made in the tenth century.]

†Haddan and Stubbs’ *Councils*, III, 407.

‡“Absolute ordinatos.” The adverb seems a misreading, but from the context it may have been “abroad” or “illegally” or “uncertainly.” [Upon the “*Episcopi vagantes*,” see Bruno Krusch, in the *Neues Archiv*, Vol. xxv, pp. 138 ff.]

§Haddan and Stubbs, III, 581.

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manent and local pastor of a country church, remaining, however, subject to his abbot.\* Yet secular priests, i.e., priests not under monastic vows, had also the care of districts allotted to them. These districts were called priestshires, shriftshires or kirkshires; the word *Parochia*, used by Gregory of Tours for a country parish, meaning in most early writers a diocese.

Such secular priests seem to be alluded to in the eighth and ninth canons of the council of Clovesho, celebrated by all the bishops of the Province of Canterbury, under Archbishop Cuthbert, in 747. The priests are commanded "to watch over their oratory (*oratorii domum*) and everything belonging to its service or decoration, and to pay great attention to the celebration of Masses and the singing of psalms," i.e., the two great divisions of the worship of God. For it may here be said once for all, since the subject does not belong to the present treatise, that the Divine Office, as well as the Mass, was performed publicly in every parish church from the arrival of St Augustine until the Reformation, unless when some extraordinary circumstances made it impossible. That the above canon relates rather to secular than monastic pastors seems probable from the next canon, which orders "that priests, throughout the places and regions of the laity, which have been assigned to them by the bishops of the province, shall endeavour to fulfil their evangelical and apostolical ministry in baptizing, instructing, and visiting the people, uniting zeal for souls with obedience to ritual" (*sub legitimo ritu ac diligenti cura*).† Forty years after this, in 786, two legates, George, Bishop of Ostia, and Theophylact, Bishop of Todi, were sent from Pope Adrian I to make a visitation of England. From the court of Offa, king of Mercia, George proceeded to Northumbria and held a council, and afterwards returning to the south held another council, but the same canons were promulgated in both; so that we may gather from them the discipline then prevailing throughout all those parts of the island belonging to the English. In these councils we have the first mention (in England) of canons living in community as distinct from monks. The sixth decree is as follows: "No priest or deacon is to be ordained, unless of approved life and properly instructed, and they must remain in the title to which they are ordained, so that no one presume to receive a priest or deacon from another title‡ without a reasonable cause and commendatory letters." All the churches were to have performed in them publicly and reverently the Divine Office (*cursum*) at the canonical hours. Regulations were also made about Mass, which will be noticed elsewhere.§

It would be a most interesting and instructive study to gather from history, especially from the lives of the saints, whatever might throw light on the subject of the priesthood—to consider the numbers of the clergy at different periods, the motives that influenced candidates, the means taken to test those motives—the studies and moral preparation previous to ordination, the question of celibacy, the worthiness or the unworthiness of the ministers of the altar, their influence, their secular position, and the rest. No subject has been more misrepresented, none better deserves careful and candid attention. But though the state of the priests is a subject closely connected with the Blessed Sacrament, it is a wide and distinct field of research, into which it is impossible here to enter fully,

\* Lingard, *Anglo Saxon Church*, I, 146.

† Haddan and Stubbs, III, 365.

‡ The "title" here mentioned indicates a fixed means of sustenance approved by the canons (such as is still required on admission to holy orders), and it appears that the title could be that of poverty, as we call it,

for those who led a monastic life, or else it might be founded on a benefice; while the benefice might be held either by a priest living in community and following a canonical rule, or by a priest serving a country church.

§ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 450, 461.



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and which it is better to pass over altogether than to treat inadequately. That there were many unworthy priests is most certain, that there were many zealous and saintly priests is abundantly proved. We shall meet as we proceed with examples both of the good and of the bad. Only one caution will I add. Neither the value of the sacrifice as offered to GOD, nor the efficacy of the sacrament as ministered to man, depends on the sanctity of the minister of the altar, but on the institution of GOD, and on JESUS CHRIST who is both High Priest and Victim, and whose power cannot be lessened nor His purity soiled by any unworthiness on the part of His visible representative. In saying this I in no way detract from the importance of sanctity in the priest both for his own sake and for the sake of others.

## CHAPTER II. THE PRIEST AT THE ALTAR

**A**MONG the injunctions issued by Grindal, Archbishop of York (afterwards of Canterbury) in 1571, are the following:\*

“That the churchwardens shall see that in their churches and chapels all altars be utterly taken down, and clear removed even unto the foundation, and the place where they stood paved, and the wall whereunto they joined whited over, and made uniform with the rest, so as no breach or rupture appear. And that the altar stones be broken, defaced, and bestowed to some common use.

“That the churchwardens and ministers shall see that antiphoners, mass-books, grailes, portesses, processions, manuals, legendaries, and all other books of late belonging to their church or chapel, which served for the superstitious Latin service, be utterly defaced, rent and abolished. And that all vestments, albs, tunics, stoles, phanons,† pixes, paxes, hand-bells, sacring-bells, censers, chrismatories, crosses, candlesticks, holy-water stocks or vats, images and all other relics and monuments of superstition and idolatry be utterly defaced, broken, and destroyed.

“That they shall half-yearly present to the ordinary the names of all such persons that be favourers of the Romish and foreign power, hearers or sayers of Masses or of any Latin service . . . receivers of any vagabond popish priests or other notorious mislikers of true religion,” etc.‡

By means of this document the reader may understand the difficulty to recover at the present day any exact information regarding the worship of Catholic England. The frenzied and diabolical hatred of the holy sacrifice of the Mass that took possession of the impure and apostate priests who brought about or co-operated in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, has left few memorials of ancient piety.

Wherever churchwardens' accounts exist we find entries similar to this of Burnham in Buckinghamshire: “Payd to tylars for breckynge downe fortē (14) awters in the cherche.”§ It is only from such scraps of history that we can rebuild and repeople in imagination the interior of the desolate old churches, where countless Masses were once offered. And with a feeling of intense sadness I begin this chapter in which I have to speak of the priests of Catholic England. The desolation which we behold gives a melancholy pathos to the memory of the zealous and holy men who once like Simon “in their life

\* Grindal's *Remains* (Parker Society), pp. 123-144.

† The maniple, the vestment on the left arm.

‡ Grindal had been brought up in the Catholic

Faith—was a priest. He made similar Injunctions afterwards for the Province of Canterbury.

§ *Collectanea Topographica*, iv, 292.

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propped up the house, and in their days fortified the temple . . . and when they went up to the altar they honoured the vesture of holiness." The present state of our churches also reminds us of the venal and sacrilegious Masses of which history contains innumerable records, and which drew down on those who offered them the vengeance of GOD, and were, it is to be feared, one of the principal causes that made our LORD suffer this portion of his vineyard to be laid waste. I do not mean that the Mass itself was defiled by the unworthiness of the minister or lost any of its merit. Water passes through the stone conduit, says St Augustine, and fertilizes the garden that receives it, though the conduit itself is not fertilized. The alms sent by the hands of a wicked servant relieves the necessities of the poor. It matters not whether he who lays or lights a fire is hot or cold, since it is not from his own body he communicates heat. So as regards those for whom Mass is offered, they are not robbed of the grace it conveys by the demerit of the visible celebrant, since he offers for them not his own blood, but the Blood of CHRIST. Not only as minister of CHRIST, but also as the representative of the Church, the prayers and blessings of a priest, like those of Balaam, are efficacious, though he who utters them be defiled by sin, or sin in his mode of blessing. The public address read to a king by a secretly disloyal mayor is the act of the loyal citizens not of the mere speaker. All this is true; yet the same fathers and theologians who insist on this point declare also, that from none do our LORD and His Church suffer so much as from unworthy priests, especially such as make a trade of holy things. And when I attribute our present evils in part to unworthy priests I do but re-echo what was boldly argued by those who were eyewitnesses of their impiety. One who wrote just at the time when the altars throughout England were being destroyed by the order of Elizabeth, exhorted the exiled priests and people, "not so lightly, so irreverently, so indevoutly to use the Blessed Sacrament as heretofore, even before the time of heresy, it was used or rather abused. For the which abuse," he says, "I assure, I earnestly believe, that as in it we did sore offend, so GOD hath sore plagued us."\*

Still more explicit is the testimony of Nicolas Sander. After dwelling on some proofs of the Catholic faith, he makes the following historical review:

"Upon this ground the Christian people were taught to esteem the holy sacrifice above all other external kinds of worshipping GOD in this life. Thence came so goodly building of so many churches, so rich decking of altars, so great foundation of chantries, in fine so much estimation of Mass, that some came to the holy order of priesthood not for devotion but for wealth. And some others went into monasteries rather for ease than for intent to serve GOD. All which became, through overmuch ease and lack of the fear of GOD, negligent in their office, dissolute in their behaviour, ignorant in good learning, and (which in that vocation is most filthy of all) ambitious, rich, covetous. And the more that in such sort unworthily presumed to those holy professions, the greater anger of GOD their sinful doing provoked against themselves.

"The people on the other side, seeing the dishonest life of certain religious persons and priests, and how irreverently they handled the divine service, fell in hatred, not so much with their faults as with the office itself, imputing the vices of evil men to a most holy vocation and ministry, against the commandment of CHRIST. They withdrew unjustly tithes and oblations, they envied the riches of the clergy, and in every alehouse discovered the privy misdoings of their spiritual fathers.

\* *The Parliament of Chryste*, by Thomas Heskins (Antwerp, 1566), II, 5, p. 99



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“When these great enormities were come to the highest, so that the cockle began to overgrow and hide the good corn, and now time required that judgement should begin at the house of God, and those that in deed were good and faithful should be discovered from the evil, Martin Luther, a friar of St Augustine’s order in Saxony, was permitted like a proud king of Babylon to come out of the north, and to make spiritual battle to the holy city of Jerusalem, because her citizens did not worship CHRIST in such purity of life as they ought to have done. Whereby it came to light who were the chaff, which is with every blast of wind carried up and down, and who were the true wheat which lieth immovable against all temptations and persevereth in the Church of God. For those that were light and evil disposed, when they understood they might keep their livings though they did not discharge the office belonging thereunto, seeing that they came to the office only to have the living, those, I say, embraced with all their endeavour the new religion of Martin Luther; and that whether they were monks and religious men, or secular priests only. Make them sure of good pensions, and they will assure the prince to give up their abbeys and monasteries. And good reason why; for they never loved neither the coat nor the vow, but only the ease and filling of their bellies.

“Then God made it evident to the world which were those who had slandered in deed the holy order of priesthood—who they were that, having licentiously kept women, said afterwards that they were their wives, and who they were that esteemed their bellies more than their vows made to God. I shall need name no man; but I think there are few men above forty years old, but they can of their own knowledge reckon up divers lewd friars and priests who, before the preaching of Luther, shamed with their dishonest behaviour the clergy of the realm. And the same men showed themselves, when broaching time came, not to have been of the Church, but of that religion whatsoever should be set forth most carnal.”\*

Testimonies like these haunt the mind when we enter the old cathedrals and parish churches of England, and see the altar slab become a paving-stone, dishonoured and trampled on.† We lament that Protestants usurp the buildings erected by Catholic generosity, which were once not only the houses of God but also the witnesses of many a beautiful act of Catholic piety; but we are constrained to acknowledge that it was not the Protestants of to-day who took these from us. No! Catholic princes, Catholic priests, Catholic nobles, Catholic mobs, worked the desolation that surrounds us; and we recall the prayer of Azarias in the fiery furnace of Babylon: “Blessed art Thou, O LORD, the God of our fathers, and Thy name is worthy of praise and glorious for ever. . . . For Thou hast executed true judgements in all the things that Thou hast brought upon us, and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our fathers; for according to truth and judgement Thou hast brought all these things upon us for our sins. . . . Deliver us not up for ever, we beseech Thee, for Thy Name’s sake, and abolish not Thy covenant. And take not away Thy mercy from us for the sake of Abraham Thy beloved, and Isaac Thy servant, and Israel, Thy holy one.” Such should be our prayer whenever we enter these

\* *The Supper of our Lord*, etc., by Nicolas Sander (Louvain, 1566), pp. 13-15.

† The author of *Churches in Cambridgeshire* speaks of more than thirty thus placed to be trampled on now known to exist. But the reader should procure Peacock’s *Church Furniture in Lincolnshire* if he wishes to know the reality of the Reformation. A few altar slabs are still *in situ*, as in Warrington, and Shot-

tleswell in Warwickshire, in the chapel of Broughton Castle, Oxon; in Belper, Derbyshire, and the transept of Jervaux Abbey. [A large number of inventories of Church goods, made under the commission of May 16, 1552, have now been published. Those for York, Durham and Northumberland, edited by Mr W. Page for the Surtees Society, may be cited as specimens of many similar publications.]

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sanctuaries, substituting only in the place of the Jewish patriarchs the names of Augustine and Paulinus, Bede, Hilda and Wilfrid, Anselm and Thomas, Margaret and Edward.

We will now turn to the days when the consecrated altar stones were unbroken and in their place of honour; and without closing our eyes to the evil for which we must still make reparation, let us by preference fix them on the good that we may perhaps imitate, and in which we can gratefully rejoice.

The first questions would probably be, who were the priests? Whence came they? How were they educated and prepared for the priesthood? How was their divine vocation tested? These are interesting as well as important questions, yet want of space compels me to pass them by. I must be content with saying that here lay, if I mistake not, the real wound of the Church of the Middle Ages. When universities were everywhere established, and the young clergy ceased for the most part to be educated in the bishops' houses, due vigilance was not exercised either in their selection or their education. The evil was felt and acknowledged, yet no wide-reaching and effective remedy was applied before the Council of Trent. Giraldus, in the twelfth century, complained of the multitude of inefficient priests, and pointed out that the only way to meet the evil was greater strictness in admitting candidates—*delectus ordinandorum*.<sup>\*</sup> The Franciscan, Adam de Marisco, often recurs to this subject in his letters.<sup>†</sup> It was one of the principal topics in Dean Colet's sermon on reform preached to the Convocation in 1511. Of course, however, there were many in every age who aspired to the priesthood from noble motives, and who prepared themselves for it in the fear and love of God; and of this the following history is an example.

St Hugh, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, when eight years old had accompanied his noble father, the lord of Avalon, to a house of Regular Clerks, among whom the old man had resolved to spend the last years of his life. The child had grown up like Samuel in the Temple, and at the age of nineteen showed so great proficiency in learning and in virtue that, by the desire of his superiors, he was ordained deacon. In this grade he ministered at the altar for several years, first with the Regular Clerks, and afterwards with the Carthusians. His biographer thus relates his elevation to the priesthood: "It chanced after he had passed some years in this life of austerity and prayer," at the Grande Chartreuse, and when he was about five-and-thirty years old, "that the time was near at hand when the Bishop of Grenoble would give ordination. A venerable old man whom Hugh was appointed to serve, and who was his spiritual director, wishing to try his disciple's spirit, said to him: 'My son, if you wish, you may now become a priest; it depends on yourself. If you consent, you can now be raised to that dignity.' To Hugh nothing had ever been sweeter than to serve in the sacred mysteries and to feed on the divine Sacraments, and hearing what was said, his heart burnt within him to approach still more freely, in the life-giving Host, both with mouth and heart, to that JESUS so dear to him, his own JESUS. He answered, therefore, in all simplicity as he felt. 'There is nothing, my father, that I desire more in this life, as far as I am free to choose.' Then the old man exclaimed, 'O what have you said? What have you said? Who would have believed that you could have been so daring as to speak thus? What a mar-

<sup>\*</sup> *Gemma Eccl.* dist. 1, cap. 49.

<sup>†</sup> Adami de Marisco Ep, inter *Monumenta Franciscana* (Rolls Series), 1858.



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vel! So often have you read that he who does not receive the priesthood unwillingly receives it unworthily; and yet now, not unwillingly but eagerly, as you yourself confess, you fear not to offer yourself.' Terrified at these words, and as it were struck by lightning, Hugh fell prostrate at the feet of his monitor, and, shedding many tears, with sobs asked pardon for his presumption. The old man for a short time concealed his feelings, though he was greatly moved at the sight of so much devotion and humility; at last he said gently, and with tears: 'Rise, rise.' And then making him sit down, the man of God said with a prophetic spirit: 'Be not disturbed, my son, or rather, my lord. I well know by what spirit and with what affection you spoke as you did. I therefore say to you in truth, a priest you will be and soon, and afterwards, when the time appointed by God shall come, you will be a bishop also.' Being ordained priest, as was foretold by his director, his progress in devotion corresponded with his advance in dignity. In his functions at the altar he acted as if he held our LORD and SAVIOUR visibly in his hands. He seemed to the bystanders, when saying Mass, to sing with the spouse in the Canticles in very deed and truth, 'My beloved to me and I to Him,' such devotion did his Beloved confer interiorly on him, and such reverence did he show exteriorly to his Beloved."\*

The age at which men were raised to the priesthood varied much; and it is important to bear in mind, when reading history, that high ecclesiastical dignities were held and important offices filled by clergymen in minor orders. Thus, St Richard of Chichester had become master of arts and doctor of canon law at Oxford, and had been chancellor of the university, and afterwards chancellor of the archdiocese of Canterbury under St Edmund, before he became a priest. It was only after the death of St Edmund in 1241 that he retired to France to study theology. He was ordained priest by the Bishop of Orleans, William de Bussin; and by his permission he built an oratory in honour of St Edmund, where he delighted to pray and offer the holy sacrifice, invoking the saint at whose Mass he had so often assisted.† St Hugh, as we have just seen, was five-and-thirty when ordained priest; St Thomas of Hereford, much older.

At all times, from the nature of an act so sublime, the day of the first offering of the holy sacrifice was made a great festival day. One or two casual allusions in old documents prove the tradition that the first Mass was celebrated with pomp by both the secular and regular clergy. In the financial regulations of the abbey of Evesham it is said that all offerings at the high altar, whether of gold or silver, belong to the sacrist, except at the time when any monk celebrates his first Mass, or sings the gospel for the first time.‡ Entries also occur in the bursars' books of the great abbeys of sums spent in entertainment of the community or of friends and relations on the occasion of a first Mass; as in the *Liber Bursarii* of Durham, "Paid to William Brown and Alexander Durham celebrating their first Masses on the 20th and 22nd of March, 1517, 13s. 4d."§

But the rule of St Gilbert of Sempringham shows that the rejoicings on such occasions were frequently carried to excess: "Those who are raised to the priesthood will celebrate at the command of their priors. No expensive feast (*onerosum convivium*) or useless invitation of seculars may be made at the celebration of first Masses. In such matters they will conform to the will

\* *Magna Vita S. Hugonis* (Rolls Series, 1864). † Life by Ralph Bocking, his Confessor. *Acta Sanctorum*, Vol. x.

‡ Tindall's *History of Evesham*, p. 117. § *The Durham Household Book* (Surtees Society), p. 340.

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of their priors.”\* Thus even in the twelfth century customs were so established that abuses had to be guarded against. We may well believe that the occasion was one of spiritual as well as of convivial exultation. The registers of William of Waynesfleet, Bishop of Winchester, show that the faithful were invited to avail themselves of special spiritual privileges accorded by the Church at such times. In 1450 he granted an indulgence of forty days to all who should assist at the first Mass of Roger Favell, just ordained priest and about to celebrate in his parish church of Notewill in the diocese of Exeter.†

St Anselm tells us what were the intentions with which a true priest approached the altar in the following prayer to our LORD: “Mindful of Thy venerable Passion, sinner though I am, I draw near Thy altar to offer the sacrifice which Thou hast instituted, and commanded to be offered for a commemoration of Thee and for our salvation. Receive it, I beseech Thee, O supreme God, for Thy holy Church and for the people whom Thou hast purchased with Thy Blood. And since Thou hast willed that I a sinner should stand between Thee and Thy people, though in me Thou seest no good thing, yet reject not the ministry Thou hast committed to me. Let not the price of their salvation be lost for my unworthiness, since Thou hast been their Victim and Redemption. I bring then, O LORD, before Thee—if Thou wilt deign in mercy to behold—the tribulations of the poor, the dangers of the people, the groans of the captives, the misery of the orphans, the necessities of strangers, the poverty of the weak, the despondencies of the sick, the decay of the old, the sighs of the young, the vows of virgins and the tears of widows. For Thou, O LORD, hast mercy on all, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made. . . . We pray Thee also, O Holy Father, for the souls of the faithful departed, that this great Sacrament of Thy mercy may be to them health, and joy, and refreshment.”‡

Among holy priests there was not always one uniform practice as to the length of time given to the celebration of Mass. There could of course be no question among such of that irreverent and hurried celebration, in which words are clipped or gabbled over and holy rites mutilated, jumbled together, or performed fantastically, a mode to which Pope Benedict XIV applies the question asked by Tertullian in another matter: “Sacrificat an insultat?”§ Archbishop Walter Raynold, in 1322, in a provincial synod held at Oxford, after declaring that “all the heavenly court without doubt waits on this Sacrament both during and after consecration,” orders that “the words of the Canon be pronounced perfectly and devoutly, but not so slowly as to weary the assistants.”||

If then there was some variety among worthy priests in this matter, they were agreed in selecting that manner of celebration that each one found most conducive to reverence and devotion according to his own character and the circumstances in which he was placed. Benedict XIV says that the example of St Thomas of Canterbury has been invoked by certain advocates of quick celebrations, but he shows how little it serves their purpose if we take the full account and not a few expressions merely of his biographers. He appeals to the life composed by Pope Gregory XI. It will, however, be better to quote earlier authorities and eyewitnesses of the Mass of the holy martyr.

\* Dugdale's *Mon. Angl.*, vi, pt II, p. 44.

† *Waynesfleet Reg.* (MS.), Vol. I, fol. 8. The indulgence was to be confirmed by the bishop of the diocese as regards his diocesans.

‡ *St Anselm*, 29, tom. I, p. 375, ed. Gerberon. There are many other prayers equally beautiful.

§ *De Sacrif. Missæ*, l. III, cap. 24.

|| Wilkins, II, 514.



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Herbert of Bosham, his familiar attendant, thus writes: "He used to eat the Immaculate Lamb with great reverence, and, out of respect for the command of the law, speedily." "*Festivus sed festinus, celebriter sed celeriter*," Herbert says, playing on words, and he goes on to complain of priests who, out of devotion or to appear devout, are very slow in celebrating Mass; and bids them imitate St Thomas, who, either to avoid distractions himself or out of compassion for the assistants, was quick at the altar. These are the words so often quoted, but that their real meaning may be understood the details must be given. St Thomas rose at midnight and assisted at matins; he next washed the feet of thirteen poor men and gave them alms. After a short repose he studied the Holy Scriptures, and continued in prayer and meditation until nine o'clock, when he either said or heard Mass. "He himself did not celebrate every day, and this was, as he himself said, not through negligence but reverence. . . . When he received the sacred vestments from the ministers, his countenance changed, and he was so affected that tears burst from his eyes. And when he stood at the altar praying for his sins and those of his people, his heart was so humbled and contrite, that he rather sobbed than spoke the words of intercession. During the early part of the Mass which is called the Mass of Catechumens, to preserve himself from distractions, while the ministers were singing, he would read some devout book, most frequently the book of prayers composed by his predecessor St Anselm. He generally said one collect, and sometimes three, but rarely if ever more. But all who witnessed his Mass attest that he wept and sobbed as if he saw and touched the wounds of Christ."\*

John of Salisbury, another familiar companion of St Thomas, adds: "When he was alone he shed tears in wonderful abundance, and when he stood at the altar, he seemed to be present even in the body at the Passion of the LORD. He handled the divine sacraments with great reverence, so that the very handling of them strengthened the faith and fervour of those who witnessed it." Benedict XIV might well say that if the advocates of quick Masses will imitate St Thomas, no fault will be found with them.

The Blessed Sacrament was the strength of the saint in all his combats. After his momentary weakness at Clarendon, he abstained in a spirit of penance from saying Mass for forty days, when he was advised by a letter from the Pope to do so no longer. In the great contest at Northampton, when threatened with imprisonment and death, fearful of his own weakness, "he prostrated himself before the altar, and there with many tears he commended to God the cause of His Church. Then arising he sent for a religious, who gave him this advice: 'To-morrow, before you go to court, celebrate solemnly the Mass of the Blessed Protomartyr, St Stephen, and there, before the sacred mysteries of the LORD's Body and Blood, commend to JESUS CHRIST the cause of His holy Church. Commend it also to the Blessed and ever Virgin Mary, to St Stephen, to our Apostle St Gregory, to St Elphege, and the other holy patrons of the Church of Canterbury. When you have done this, trusting in the mercy of God and the protection of the saints, go on securely and act with confidence. It is God's business rather than yours, and He will be with you.'" This we learn from Roger of Pontigny, another companion of the saint, and Herbert de Bosham tells us how the archbishop followed the monk's advice. "He could scarcely finish the collects, being choked with sobs and tears; but when the Mass was over his countenance changed. It had expressed humility and

\* Herbert de Bosham, Migne, P.L. tom. cxc, pp. 355, 1098, etc.

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contrition when he was speaking with God, now it was resplendent with fortitude and majesty."

This double testimony to the tears of St Thomas of Canterbury leads me to make a few remarks on the gift of tears, for which there is a special collect in the Roman Missal. A recent writer, not alluding, however, to holy Mass or to any act of worship, speaks of "the strange heroic readiness to weep," to which the old chroniclers so often bear witness.\* The poet Gray looked on this readiness not as a womanly weakness, but as a beatitude. The following beautiful lines occur in one of his letters:

O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros  
Ducentium ortus ex animo, quater  
Felix in imo qui scatentem  
Pectore te, pia nympha, sentit.

Professor Stubbs, in his valuable *Introduction to the Life of St Dunstan*, speaks of "that gift of tears which is so curiously unintelligible at the present day."† I venture, however, here to disagree him. At least as regards the holy Mass it is not unintelligible to those who have faith. Rather it is strange to the intellect and painful to the heart that we should be able to stand at the altar unmoved and with dry eyes. For whether we consider the infinite condescension of God, the tenderness of His love, the greatness of His Majesty, the wretchedness of our own souls, or the needs of those for whom we offer the holy sacrifice, we might well find motives for compunction.

St Anselm, in asking for the gift of tears, lamented this dryness: "Grant me, O sweet JESUS, that evident sign of love, an ever-flowing font of tears. I call to mind, O merciful LORD, how, when Anna, who came to the tabernacle to petition for a son, shed tears in praying, 'her countenance was no more changed.' But when I think of her virtue and constancy, I am grieved and confused at finding myself fallen so low. For if she wept and continued weeping, asking for a son, how much more ought I to lament, and ever to lament, who am seeking and loving God, and sighing for His possession? It is strange that tears are not become my bread day and night. Look down then upon me and pity me, for the sorrows of my heart are multiplied. Grant me Thy heavenly consolation, spurn not my sinful soul for which Thou hast died. Grant me tears from my inmost heart, to wash away my sins and fill my soul with heavenly joy; so that if I cannot attain to the life or the compunction of perfect monks, at least I may have some share in Thy kingdom with devout women. O my only refuge, O Thou, the only hope of the wretched, whom we never implore without hope of mercy, grant me this grace for Thy own sake and for Thy Holy Name, that whenever I think of Thee, or write of Thee, or read of Thee, or speak of Thee, whenever I minister to Thee, or offer praise and prayer and sacrifice to Thee, so often may tears well up and flow freely and sweetly in Thy presence."

When men thus thought and thus prayed, it is without any surprise that we read words similar to what were written of Robert Hathbrande, prior of St Augustine's, Canterbury, who died in 1370: "In the Divine Office he was most simple and devout. In the ministry of the altar he could seldom refrain from tears."‡

Bede thus describes St Cuthbert's tears at Mass: "So filled was he with compunction, and so great was his desire of heavenly things, that when celebrating holy Mass he never could come to the conclusion thereof without a plentiful shedding of tears. So while he celebrated the mysteries of our LORD's passion,

\* Notice of Mr O'Hagan's translation of the *Chanson de Roland*, *Athenæum*, July 3, 1880.

† *Memorials of St Dunstan* (Rolls Series) p. 59.

‡ *Anglia Sacra*, I, p. 142.



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he imitated that which he was doing, sacrificing himself to the LORD in the contrition of his heart. And it was more his sighs than his voice that called on the people to lift up their hearts and to give thanks to the LORD GOD, his own heart being lifted up rather than his voice.”\*

In 1318, an inquisition was held regarding the virtues and miracles of Robert Winchelsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1312. His chaplains attested his great devotion in saying Mass, and that he wept so abundantly that the corporal and altar-cloths were wet; also that he used to stand at the altar as if he saw CHRIST present before him hanging on the cross.†

Richard of Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford and successor of St Thomas Cantalupe, who died in 1282, was for fourteen years the intimate attendant of the saint. In his sworn evidence for his canonization he says: “The manner in which Bishop Thomas handled the divine sacraments increased the faith and devotion of the beholders. When he stood at the altar to celebrate Mass, he had so contrite and humble a heart and shed such abundance of tears as if he had present before him the passion of our LORD.” He adds that “on account of this great devotion he was very slow in saying Mass.”‡ John of Kemeseya, a canon of Hereford, and well acquainted with St Thomas, testified that “he never saw the saint say Mass without shedding tears before the elevation of the Body of CHRIST; and he thought that he had assisted at or served his Mass more than a hundred times.” St Thomas said his last Mass at Monte Fiascone (where he died) in the church of the Friars Minor, for one of his deceased relations; and “though there were many persons round about the altar, looking at him in the face, he yet celebrated with his usual devotion and with many tears.” Roger of Hunnedon, subprior of the eremites of St Augustine in London, affirmed that “when he was ordained priest by the saint in the church of Leominster, he happened to be nearest of all to the altar and could see clearly, and he noticed from the beginning of the canon that Thomas never ceased to shed tears and kept wiping them with a handkerchief which lay on the altar.” William of Cantalupe also declared that St Thomas “celebrated frequently, wept much, and that his Masses were long.”§

We have learnt from Herbert of Bosham that St Thomas of Canterbury did not say Mass every day, and that in this matter devotion varied. His successor, St Edmund, offered the holy sacrifice so frequently that he often passed a whole month without tasting flesh-meat because it was his custom to abstain from it both the day before and the day on which he celebrated. || St Gilbert of Sempringham, on the other hand, did not allow priests to offer Mass at all while they were novices.¶ Giralduſ, when rebuking priests who said Mass frequently, sometimes duplicating out of avarice, brings against them the example of the Carthusians:\*\* “If the holy order of the Carthusians,” he says, “who are offered to GOD as a holocaust and are cleansed from the stains of the world by abstinence and maceration of the flesh, and who fly on the wings of the wind, if these only venture to consecrate on feasts and pro-feasts which have a special office, how do you, bold sinner, dare to touch the holy things irreverently twice a day?”

Erasmus, in his account of Colet, dean of St Paul’s, remarks: “Although it is customary with the priests in England to celebrate Mass almost every

\* Beda, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, cap. 16; also *Hist.*, iv, 27.

† Wilkins, II, p. 489.

‡ *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. XLIX, Oct. 2, p. 602.

§ *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. XLIX, p. 556.

|| *Chronicon de Melsa*, I, p. 439 (Rolls Series).

¶ Dugdale’s *Mon. Angl.*, vi, pt ii, p. 43.

\*\* *Gemma Eccl.*, dist. II, cap. 24. Brewer has printed Cistercians, but it should certainly be Carthusians. Giralduſ was no friend of the Cistercians, nor do his words suit their customs.

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day, yet he was contented to do so only on Sundays and feasts, or at most on very few days besides, whether because he was engaged in his sacred studies by which he prepared himself for preaching, or whether he had found that he worshipped with greater devotion if it was with some intermission. Yet he by no means blamed the practice of those who chose to approach the altar every day."

The liberty of celebrating Mass more than once in the day which we have seen in the Anglo-Saxon Church has been gradually restricted. The council of London, A.D. 1200, decreed: "A priest may not celebrate twice in one day except in case of necessity." What was understood by necessity was explained a few years later by Cardinal Langton. "Let no one presume to celebrate twice a day except on Christmas day and Easter, and if a corpse has to be buried, or if espousals have to be made, or the priest have to supply for another who is sick or necessarily absent. He who violates this prohibition without canonical necessity is suspended *ab officio*."\* Similar statutes were made in subsequent councils, and they are evidently directed not against the indiscreet fervour of the devout, but against the avarice which trafficked with holy things.

We should naturally expect that those who were only too ready to say Mass whenever any emolument therefrom was forthcoming would be too slothful or indevout to celebrate when such incentive of gain was absent.

We have seen that among the Saxons the married clergy, whose depravity aroused the zeal of St Ethelwold and St Oswald, were rarely found at the altar; similarly the married Culdees of the twelfth century in the church of St Andrew's had little enough inclination for being brought by Mass face to face with JESUS CHRIST. "There was no one," it is recorded in the Register of St Andrew's, drawn up in 1144, "to serve the altar of the Blessed Apostle, nor was Mass said there except when the king or bishop came, which happened rarely. The Culdees performed their office after their fashion in a corner of the church, though the church itself was small enough."† A remedy for these abuses was found by the zeal of St David, the King of Scotland.

A visitation of his cathedral held in 1440, by William Aiscough, Bishop of Salisbury, revealed a state of things little less disgraceful. It is stated that by the babbling of the canons and vicars in the choir the divine offices were interrupted, and that by their gestures and impropriety of conduct the devotion of the people was much diminished. The canons absented themselves and paid (or ought to have paid) salaries to certain vicars to replace them. Some of these in priest's orders celebrated scarcely once a month, and others not even once a year.‡ The bishop did his best, both then and in a second visitation a few years later, to remedy these evils, but without much success. The conduct of such priests had already furnished arguments to the Lollards, as it afterwards supplied pretexts for the reformers of the next century, and Bishop Aiscough fell a martyr to his zeal. In 1450, during the rebellion of Jack Cade, the bishop had retired to the village of Edington. A party of miscreants, led by a butcher of Salisbury, repaired to his retreat on June 29, and found him in the act of celebrating Mass, the day being the festival of St Peter and St Paul. Regardless of the sanctity of the place, of the respect due to his character, and of the solemn office in which he was engaged, they dragged him from the altar to a neighbouring eminence and there dashed out his brains. Leaving his

\* Wilkins, 1, 505, 531. The synod of London makes regulations regarding the purification of the fingers and non-rinsing of the chalice at the first Mass by a priest obliged to duplicate similar to

those which are followed at the present day.

† Haddan and Stubbs, vol. II, pt I, p. 179.

‡ Aiscough Register B, quoted by Sir R. Hoare in his *History of Wiltshire* (City of Salisbury), p. 191.



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mangled body they tore his bloody garments into strips to bear about in triumph, and then ended their atrocities with plunder and pillage.\* Thus he who had been so zealous for holy Mass died in the very act of saying it. If the church has not placed William Aiscough, like Thomas à Becket, in her list of martyrs, it is probably because distinct proof is wanting that his death was due to hatred of religion and not to social and political passions. Of St Thomas of Canterbury, his friend John of Salisbury wrote only a few months after his martyrdom to the Bishop of Poitiers: "Remark where he was slain. In the principal and mother church of the kingdom, among his priests and the crowd of religious whom the noise made by the armed band of murderers had caused to run together to the piteous spectacle. He who had so long offered himself a living victim, holy, acceptable to God, he who had crucified his flesh and its concupiscences in prayers and vigils, fasts and rough cilices, he who had as a true servant of CHRIST accustomed his back to the scourges, as his familiar attendants knew, he who used to offer the Body and Blood of CHRIST at the altar, falling before the altar there offered his own blood poured out by the hands of the impious."†

In gathering together this collection of fragments of the history of the Holy Eucharist, it is impossible to pass over a crime or supposed crime connected with the memory of a saint. It is well known that when St William, after celebrating holy Mass in York, on Trinity Sunday, 1154, suddenly sickened, and after eight days died, a report was spread abroad that he had died from poison that had been mixed with the wine in the chalice. This was even stated in a hymn:

In octavis Pentecostes, quidam malignantes hostes  
In eum pacificum,  
Et ut ipsum priverent vita, celebrantis aconita  
Propinant in calicem.  
Toxicatur a profanis ille potus, ille panis,  
Per quem perit toxicum.

Whether this horrible and impious deed was really committed cannot now be known with certainty. Symphorianus, one of the archbishop's clerks, accused Archdeacon Osbert, his most vehement opponent, of the crime before the king and the council. But others indignantly denied the truth of the report.‡ Walbran, in his notes to the *Memorials of Fountains*, gives an account of the saint's last moments by a contemporary writer, who does not even allude to the suspicion that his death came by poisoning. This author says: "In all things showing himself a true minister of CHRIST; after having endured so many trials for the LORD, after nightly vigils and bitter penitential tears; putting on the breast-plate of justice, and shod with the preparation of the Gospel, he joyously took his place at the sacred altar at the appointed hour, to immolate the SON to His FATHER. It pleased Him, however, who made both heaven and earth, to adorn heaven rather than earth with this most precious pearl; and for this end He chose the time when the holy prelate, purified in body and soul, had girt himself for the solemn celebration of the Feast of the most Holy Trinity, that by the worthy reception of the Eternal Bread he might present himself as an eternal oblation to the one God in Trinity. Having then completed the holy mysteries on that great festival, and passed some time (in thanksgiving), he returned to his palace and superin-

\* Sir R. Hoare, *Hist. Wilts* (City of Salisbury), p. 130.

† Joann. Salisb. Ep. 286, *Bib. Max. Lug.*, tom. XXIII, p. 528.

‡ William of Newborough, a judicious and contemporary writer, gives a detailed refutation of the poisoning (*De Rebus Anglicanis*, 1, p. 26).

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tended the preparations made for the sumptuous entertainment of his guests. While they were at table the blessed prelate entered his room, and with prophetic spirit announced to his attendants the day of his departure. For eight days, while the fever ran its course, he admitted no other physician than the heavenly One; and as long as he lived, like a mother nourishing her little ones, he fed his attendants on the word of God, and passed day and night in prayer. On the ninth day, feeling his dissolution at hand, breaking asunder the chains of flesh, he bade his brethren farewell, and with joyful countenance he yielded his still more joyful spirit into the hands of the LORD." \* I should therefore gladly put away the thought that this most detestable of crimes was ever committed in England, and class the death of William FitzHerbert among the peaceful ones that have been peculiarly sanctified by being consummated or at least begun at the altar. The old writers fondly dwell on such circumstances. Of Henry of Estria, Prior of Canterbury, who died in 1330, it is said that "when he had laboriously exercised his office of prior for forty-seven years, at last in his ninety-second year, during the celebration of Mass after the elevation of our LORD's Body, on the 6th of the Ides of April, he ended his life in peace." †

St Ælred, abbot of Rievaulx, suffered from the stone for ten years before his death. His marvellous and perpetual abstinence had reduced his body almost to a skeleton, yet there was an angelic splendour on his countenance from his uninterrupted converse with God. For a year before his death a dry cough, which seemed to tear his chest, together with his other infirmities, brought him to such a state of weakness that although he would not cease to say Mass while he had strength to stand, yet after saying it he lay for an hour motionless and speechless on his bed. He died at the age of 57 in the year 1166. ‡

Eadmer, the friend of St Anselm, relates similar traits of the archbishop's devotion to the holy sacrifice in his last moments. When the saint could no longer walk, having a great desire to be present at the consecration of our LORD's Body, which he had ever venerated with special devotion, he had himself carried to the oratory in a chair; and though this much weakened him and he was desired to desist, he only yielded five days before his death. He died on Wednesday in Holy Week, 1109, while his attendants were reading to him the Passion and had just come to the words: "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations: and I dispose to you, as My FATHER hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom."

I have spoken of the great devotion with which St Edmund of Canterbury ever celebrated Mass. It is related that when the Body of CHRIST was brought to him before his death, after adoring the Blessed Sacrament, he spoke with wonderful compunction the following words: "Thou art He in whom I have believed, whom I have preached. I call Thee, O LORD, to witness that never have I sought on earth aught else but Thee. And Thou knowest that I wish for nothing but what Thou wishest: Thy will be done."

\* *Memorials of Fountains* (Surtees Society, 1863, vol. II, p. 111). Walbran sees "a peculiarity of expression which may savour of suspicion" of the saint's having been poisoned in the words of this author: "ut patri filium immolaret!" He would seem, however, to have quite misinterpreted them.

The chronicler does not allude to St William offering himself, a son of God, as a victim to his Father, but of his offering the Son of God in sacrifice on the altar.

† *Anglia Sacra*, I, 64.

‡ *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. II, p. 32.



# REQUISITES FOR MASS

## CHAPTER III. REQUISITES FOR MASS

IF so great attention was paid to the place of celebration, it is clear that no care would be deemed superfluous when bestowed upon the materials to be used in the holy rite which our LORD Himself had chosen for conversion into His own Flesh and Blood. He had selected things easily to be procured throughout the world—bread made of the flour of wheat, wine pressed from the grape and mixed with water. These elements were simple enough to be looked on as the very staff of life and normal sustenance of men, yet rich enough not to be excluded from the most luxurious banquet. Unlike most of the victims used on Jewish altars they are essentially *clean* in their character and use, and such as to cause loathing or disgust to none. And lastly, though easily consumed, they are capable of being kept incorrupt for a considerable time.

The thirty-ninth of St Dunstan's canons is as follows: "We decree that no priest shall ever be so rash as to celebrate Mass unless he have ready all things necessary for the Eucharist; viz., a pure oflete or oblation, pure wine and pure water. Woe to him who begins Mass when any of these is wanting, and woe to him who adds anything which may adulterate them. He would be like those Jews who mixed vinegar and gall and scoffingly offered them to CHRIST."\*

A few words about each of these elements will be sufficient.

The bread used at Mass was not common bread, mixed with barm or salt. It was made of the finest wheaten flour that could be procured. Hence Bede makes the pagan sons of Saba say to St Mellitus, "Give us that fine white bread" (*panem nitidum*). Alcuin teaches that "the bread which is consecrated into the Body of CHRIST should be the very cleanest and without the leaven of any other infection."† In the edition of Theodore's *Penitential* published by Thorpe it is said: "No priest may offer in sacrifice anything but what our LORD taught should be offered, that is to say, bread without leaven, and wine mixed with water, for out of the side of our LORD issued blood and water."‡ A decree of Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, in the eighth century, which was translated into Anglo-Saxon for use in England, orders the priest either to bake the altar-breads himself, or at least to superintend the baking of them by his servants. The breads in baking were pressed between two irons as at present; these baking irons were called a bult or singing-irons, or in Latin *ferrum* or *ferramentum*. In monasteries the preparation of the breads was converted into an ecclesiastical rite, the ministers engaged in it wearing surplices and chanting psalms.§ Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick in the time of St Anselm, mentions that every priest should have his box of altar-breads and baking-irons (*pixis cum oblatis et ferrum eorum*).||

In order not to return again to this subject, a few facts belonging to a later period may be here mentioned. A constitution of William of Bleys, A.D. 1229, says: "Great care must be taken that the altar-breads (*oblatae*) be made of pure grains of wheat. The ministers of the Church, wearing surplices, must make the altar-breads in an honourable place. The instrument by which they

\* Spelman, 1, 447; Wilkins, 1, 225; Thorpe, 11, 252.

† Alcuini, *Epist.*, 75.

‡ Thorpe, 11, 58. Mr Chambers, an Anglican, proves the antiquity of unleavened bread in his *Divine Worship in England*, p. 236.

§ Lanfranc gives directions, *Op.* pp. 135-9 (ed. Giles). || *De usu ecclesiastico*, Migne, tom. CLIX, p. 1002.

From an incident mentioned in the life of St Vandrille in 895, it is clear that nuns made altar-breads at least for the use of their own monasteries. (*Acta Sanctorum*, Julii, t. v.; Rock, 1, 152.)

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are baked may be smeared with wax, not with oil or grease; the ofletes must be white and well rounded."\* William Russell, Bishop of Sodor, A.D. 1350, after saying that the altar-breads must be round, without any flaw, since the LAMB was without spot and no bone was broken, quotes the following lines:

Candida, triticea, tenuis, non magna, rotunda,  
Expers fermenti, non mista sit hostia Christi,  
Inscribatur, aquâ non cocta sed igne sit assa.†

William de Waddington, in some verses intended for the people, draws many moralities from the qualities of the altar-bread: "The uble,"‡ he says, "is small, so should we be little in will; it is made of wheat, the loveliest corn that men eat, so should we be meek and lovely; its paste must not be of sour dough, and we should not be envious; as wheat will not prick, as oats and barley do, so we must have no thorn of idleness; as the paste is not of mixed corn, so we must not mix up with avarice; as the uble is not thick, so we must not be gluttons; as it is white, we must not be blackly licherous."§

This kind of moralizing, of which our ancestors were so fond, may appear trifling or far-fetched, but surely it was good to take every occasion to denounce the seven capital vices. It was but a development of the apostolic words, "Let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" and the apostle did but enlarge upon his Master's words, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." St Anselm replied as follows to the questionings of Walram, Bishop of Naumburg, on the subject of the controversy regarding unleavened bread: "Fermented and unfermented bread are substantially the same, and therefore the Eucharist can be consecrated in either; but it is better to consecrate in unleavened bread, both in imitation of our LORD, and for the signification. We are reminded thereby to be free from the leaven of malice and wickedness. We do not Judaize, as the Greeks pretend. To do what Jews do is not to Judaize when it is done for a different reason. When then we use in sacrifice unleavened bread, not in order that by the absence of leaven we may foreshow that CHRIST will be pure, but that, by the operation of divine power, we may consecrate pure bread into His Body, as He Himself did, we are not following the antiquities of the Law, but the truths of the Gospel."||

In the great Abbey of Evesham very detailed instructions were given to the sacristan on the preparation of the ofletes or obleys: "The corn must, if possible, be selected with great care, grain by grain. When selected let it be placed in a clean bag, made of good cloth and kept for that purpose only, and carried by a servant of good character to the mill. Let some other corn be first ground to clean the millstones. The place where the flour is to be made into dough must be surrounded by a curtain. Then one of the ministers, spreading the flour on a very clean table, will sprinkle it with water and knead it well with his hands. The servant who holds the baking-irons will have his hands covered with gloves. While the hosts are being made and baked all will keep silence, except that he who holds the irons may briefly say what is needful to the servant who makes the fire and carries the wood. This wood ought to be very dry and set

\* Wilkins, *Concilia*, I, 623. Similarly Bishop Peter Quivil of Exeter, 1287 A.D. (*Ib.* II, 131). † *Ib.* III, 10.

‡ Dr Furnivall, in his introduction to the *Handlyng Synne*, translates "wafer," but Robert de Brunne gives in English "uble," or "oble," or "ubble." This word came from the French "oublie" and the low Latin "oblea." In later English it was "obley." And in

Myrk's *Instruction to Parish Priests* we find the consecrated particle called the "ost." The word "wafer" was, however, in use for the unconsecrated breads, thus in 1375: "Pro iii. m. wafers emptis pro choro, 7s. 8d." (York Fabric Rolls.)

§ Robert de Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Furnivall. || S. Anselmi, *Op.* t. I, 200.



# REQUISITES FOR MASS

apart on purpose several days before.”\* In this document silence is prescribed, but in some places psalms were sung during the baking; and it has been conjectured † that from that circumstance the name of singing-bread came to be given to the altar-breads in later English. The devotion of St Wenceslas is well-known, who sowed and reaped and ground the corn and baked the breads with his own hand. An English nobleman named Walter FitzRobert, who died in 1198, gave to the priory of St Mary of Charity at Daventry, in Northamptonshire, a right annually to “twenty-four burdens of firewood for the use of the sacrist in preparing the hosts.” ‡

Among the points enumerated in the verses given above was *Inscribatur*, “let it be marked.” According to an authority of the ninth century § the hosts had certain marks impressed upon them by the irons, either

XPC, or IHC, or DS, or .

A learned Lutheran named Calvör gives an engraving of ancient figures which were stamped on irons, from which we see that there was a great variety allowed, at least at a somewhat later period. We have the crucifix with Mary and John; angels carrying the instruments of the Passion; our LORD at the column, or in His agony, or an *Ecce Homo*, or our LORD rising from the tomb; or a bannered Lamb; or our Lady, or a Church with our Lady and Divine Child behind; or a resplendent sun.||

As the people for some centuries made their offering of bread and wine, some of which was consecrated for their own communion, the legates of Pope Adrian I in 786 decreed that “oblations of the faithful should not be like crust, but bread.” ¶

Wine was more difficult to procure in England than bread; hence we find a Council of Winchester in 1076 taking precautions lest any priest through excessive ignorance should attempt to celebrate either with water alone, or with beer as a substitute for wine.\*\* Wine, however, has been imported into England at least ever since the Romans invaded it, and has been at all times easy to procure from more southern countries. But until the union of the vine-growing provinces of France with the English crown under Henry II the vine was much cultivated in England. Some authors, indeed, have thought that the word *vinea* might mean merely an orchard, but the contrary has been successfully proved. The vine was planted in Britain soon after A.D. 280. Bede expressly says that in his day it was grown in certain places. John Twyne thinks that Winchester (Wintonia) derives its name from the wine grown near it. Pegge, an antiquarian who has discussed this subject, says: “I think there were few great monasteries but what had vineyards.” †† There were several in Kent belonging to Canterbury. The Bishop of Rochester had one

\* The Latin is given in Tindal’s *History of Evesham*, p. 185.

† [Cf. Lanfranc, Wilkins, I, 349; and especially the *Customary of St Augustine’s, Canterbury*. H. Bradshaw Society, 1902, p. 119, and Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 194 and 278.] Dr Rock supposes the name to come from the singing of the Mass. The name survived the Reformation. In 1569 there is an entry in the accounts of the parish church of Sheffield for “a box to put the synginge bread in” (Hunter’s *History of Hallamshire*, p. 246). [The French also spoke of *pains à chanter*.]

‡ Baker’s *History of Northamptonshire*, I, 311. [Legacies to provide bread and wine are, however, comparatively rare in mediæval England, while those intended for the maintenance of various “lights” before this or

that statue or altar are simply countless. See the classified lists in Duncan’s *Testamenta Cantiana*, 1907.]

§ See Dr Rock, I, 149.

|| Calvör, *de Ritibus*. This plate is reproduced in Chambers, *Divine Worship in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*.

¶ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 452.

\*\* “Quod sacrificium de cerevisia vel sola aqua non fiat, sed solummodo vino aqua mixto” (Wilkins, I, 365).

†† See Dr Pegge, *Archæologia*, I, 344. Sir H. Ellis, in his introduction to *Domesday Book*, says that there are at least eight-and-thirty entries of vineyards in the different counties, especially in Berkshire, Wiltshire, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Worcestershire, and Essex.

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at Halling, the wine from which was good enough to be offered as a present to Edward II. William of Malmesbury praises the wines grown in Gloucestershire. Vineyards are found even as far north as Darley Abbey, in Derbyshire. Now, though there was not much danger of adulteration, except perhaps by water, in imported wines in those days, yet it is probable that wine was cultivated in England rather for its purity than for its excellence. Sour or poor wine could be mixed with honey and spices for table use. Of course no mixture of this sort was allowed in wine destined for the altar, and care is frequently recommended in the canons that it should not be too sour.

The colour of the wine was a matter of indifference. Waddington says it might be "vermail ou blanc."\* The Bishop of Sodor (1350) says "the wine must not be acid, and rather red than white, though white is valid, if it is not vinegar." An entry in the churchwarden's accounts of St Mary Hill, London, for 1531, mentions "three gallonds and six pynts of malvesay for a yere, for Lady's Masse—3s. 9d.," and in those of Smarden in Kent, in 1553, several kinds of wine are recorded, malvoisie, bastard, red, white, French,† but these entries probably belong to the last year of Edward VI rather than the first of Mary. The churchwardens appear to have been making experiments as regards the taste of the Protestant parishioners. In Catholic times we find many gifts of wine for the altar. Peter of Falconberg, to quote but one example, gave to the monks of Meaux, in Yorkshire, an annual revenue of five shillings to buy mass wine,‡ a sum which in the fourteenth century would more than suffice for a daily Mass throughout the year.§

As to the mingling a few drops of water with the wine, Venerable Bede gives this mystical meaning: "Because we must abide in CHRIST, and He in us, the wine of our LORD's chalice is mixed with water, since, according to St John, the waters are the nations. Hence it is not lawful to offer water alone nor wine alone, just as grains of wheat are not offered alone but mixed with water and so converted into bread. And this is done lest an oblation without this use of water should seem to signify a separation of the Head from the members, as if CHRIST could have suffered except from love of our redemption, or as if we could be saved or made acceptable to God without the Passion of CHRIST."

In order that a priest might be able to offer the holy sacrifice with due reverence, some other things were requisite besides those which have been enumerated. He required a paten and chalice for the bread and wine, he was bound to be clothed in certain sacrificial vestments, and the altar itself on which he was to celebrate Mass had to be prepared. On all these things the Church had legislated, prescribing what was decent and becoming, but leaving it to the free devotion of the clergy and laity to supply what was rich and splendid.||

Though in times of persecution and under the pressure of great necessity, the Church has allowed every kind of vessel to be used to hold the wine of the sacrifice, and to become the receptacle of the Precious Blood, yet it has been her practice to forbid the general use of whatever is brittle, porous or

\* "Donc peut-il le pain muer  
En char, et en son cors tres cher  
E le vin vermail ou blanc  
En sun precius sanc."—*Manuel des Pêchés*.

† *Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. ix, p. 228.

‡ *Chronicon de Melsa*, i, 419 (Rolls Series).

§ Stowe tells us that, in the reign of Edward III,

Gascoign wines were sold at 4d. the gallon, Rhenish at 6d., and that Malmsey, which was most used at the altar, cost 1½d. per pint.

|| [Penalties were enacted against priests who offended against these regulations; see the *Laws of the Northumbrian Priests*, 13 ff.; Liebermann, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, i, p. 381.]



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sordid.\* Hence we find decrees issued by many Anglo-Saxon synods forbidding the use of wax or glass chalices as being too brittle, wood as too porous, and horn as being unclean. Copper also was objected to as liable to oxidize, but tin and pewter were tolerated in case of poverty. Chalices of gold or silver were preferred; and the paten was required to be of the same material as the chalice. Both chalice and paten were consecrated by the bishop “ad conficiendum in eis corpus et sanguinem DOMINI nostri JESU CHRISTI.”†

Both the priests and clergy in general were bound to wear a distinctive dress, and though on a journey they were allowed to put aside the long garment they habitually wore, yet they were commanded to resume it at the door of the church, and in no case to enter the chancel (*cancelli*) or approach the altar without it. But when the priest offered the holy sacrifice, besides his usual clerical garment he put on several others appropriate to the rite.‡ The origin of each of these has exercised the minds of liturgical writers and archæologists from a very early period; but I shall not enter into any detailed description of the sacerdotal vestments. It is enough to say that, by the time Christianity was introduced among the Anglo-Saxons, the dress for Mass consisted of various parts “with very few and unimportant differences, the same both in number, shape, material and ornament as those which, to the present day, the Catholic priesthood in England and throughout Christendom wear at the altar.”§ The priest, then as now, wore an amice, alb, girdle, maniple, stole and chasuble. The priest did not then cross his stole on his breast, but wore it hanging free, as bishops do now. A change took place in this respect about the fourteenth century. The maniple was at first carried in the hand, and not hung from the arm or wrist as at present. The deacon wore an alb, girdle, stole and sometimes the folded chasuble, at others the dalmatic. He wore the stole thrown over the left shoulder and hanging loose, not under but over his other vestments. The subdeacon wore an alb, girdle, maniple and tunic. Both chasuble and cope were vestments common to the clergy from the highest to the lowest.



CHASUBLE OF ST THOMAS

\* St Jerome, speaking of the spiritual riches contained in the Blessed Sacrament, and of the poverty of St Exuperius, Bishop of Marseilles, who had sold the rich vessels of his church for the relief of the poor, wrote: “There is no one richer than he is, though he carries the Body of the Lord in a basket of twigs, and His Blood in a vessel of glass.”—*Ad Rusticum de B. Exuperio*.

† Chambers gives all the forms used from the eighth to the fifteenth century. There is little variation, except that the use of chrism is ordered by the later Pontificals (*Divine Worship*, p. 250).

‡ “Docemus ut nec missalis sacerdos nec parochialis aliquis intra ostium ecclesiæ veniat vel intra cancellos absque superiori suo indumento, nec ad altaris un-

quam ministerium absque vestitu designato” (Dunstan’s 46th Canon; Wilkins, i, 226). So, also, when the Scotch priests were forbidden to say mass “nudis cruribus,” the meaning was that they should not wear their national dress under the sacrificial vestments.

§ [The chapters on vestments in Rock’s *Church of our Fathers* (second edition, 1904) are of value for their information regarding English usages, but the history of their origin and development should be studied in Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, Freiburg, 1907. The illustrations in Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, 8 vols, 4to, are also very useful. Braun considers that the introduction of strictly liturgical attire began somewhat later than†Fr. Bridgett here supposes.]

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Before approaching the altar to offer the holy sacrifice the priest had to see that it was properly prepared, for he could not lay his chalice and paten on the bare altar-stone. It was covered with a pall made of linen or silk, often of a purple dye. Over the pall three or more linen cloths were laid. The outer one was called the corporal, and was not then small like those which we now use, but much larger than the surface of the altar, so that it could be drawn over the chalice and paten. It was always made of white linen; for it was understood to represent the winding-sheet in which our Blessed Redeemer's Body was wrapped when laid in the tomb, as Venerable Bede expressly teaches. The corporals were blessed by the bishop, and the prayer beautifully expresses the belief in the holy sacrifice: "O GOD, who didst allow Thy whole self to be wrapped by Joseph in a winding-sheet woven of linen, kindly take heed unto our words. We beseech Thee, O LORD, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless and hallow these corporals for the use of Thy altar, to consecrate upon them, or to cover and wrap in them, the Body and Blood of Thy SON our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and that they may be fitting for their high service, so that whatever shall be immolated according to the sacred rite upon them unto Thee, as Melchisedech offered up to Thee an acceptable holocaust which he had brought, so may our sacrifices become acceptable."\*

## CHAPTER IV. THE LITURGY AND CEREMONIAL OF THE MASS

A MINUTE study of the history of liturgical variations even in one country requires volumes, and I shall here restrict myself to a few general principles of prominent facts, which may be understood by those who have no further acquaintance with liturgical matters than belongs to almost every educated layman.

It has been said already that the language of the liturgy was Latin. The reasons for which the Church has adopted this language throughout the West have been treated of by many writers. But the very glance into history which we have already made suffices to make some of them evident. We have seen St Augustine and his companions coming from Italy to a country inhabited by races of whose language they were entirely ignorant. They pass through Gaul, and bring with them interpreters. In the meantime they are able to offer the holy sacrifice throughout the whole region they traverse in their journey hither, and in all their missionary travels. They find Latin used in offering the holy rites both among Gauls and Britons; and with the knowledge of a common tongue they have an easy means of intercourse. The Scottish (or Irish) missionaries who come to their help in Northumberland, Mercia and elsewhere, use also the Latin language. The thought of translating those sacred formulæ and prayers, composed by saints, into the uncultivated and various dialects of Angles, Jutes and Saxons, Britons, Scots and Picts, never seemed to have suggested itself to anyone. And, indeed, for whose advantage should it have been undertaken? Not for the clergy, for unless they were to remain utterly ignorant and

\* Egbert's *Pontifical*. [The antiquity and universality of the practice of blessing the altar linen is also attested by the ancient Irish "rule" ascribed to St Patrick, and probably, in its present form, of the eighth century or earlier. This document declares

that "there should be Offering (i.e., Mass) on the altar, on solemnities and chief feasts and Sundays, and that there should be fittings on each altar and portable altar, and consecrated linen cloths" (*Eriu*, vol. 1, 1904, p. 223.)



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to cut themselves off from all the learning of the past and of other nations, and from all intercourse with the rest of the world, it was of absolute necessity that they should learn Latin. Not for the sake of the laity, for most of those, who could be taught letters at all, learned something of Latin, while those who could not read would have gathered very little more of the sense of those mystic prayers and sublime but obscure psalms, had they heard them in their mother tongue. The missionaries, therefore, wisely confined their efforts to instructing the simple laity in the Creed and LORD'S Prayer and making them familiar with the elements of Christian doctrine and the outlines of Gospel history. None but those who are acquainted practically with Catholic populations will imagine that, for want of knowledge of the language of the liturgy, the people were utterly ignorant of what was done or said, or could take no intelligent part in public worship. To enter further into this subject would be superfluous to those who are Catholics, and perhaps useless to those who are not. I would merely observe that it was owing to the use of Latin that the nations of Europe were welded into one commonwealth of Christendom, and it is also due to the same use that we ourselves have any real knowledge of their literature or worship.

To have said that the language of the liturgy was Latin is not the same thing as to assert that the liturgy itself was Roman, for there were various modifications of the liturgy in the West, though Latin was common to them all. Nevertheless it may be affirmed with certainty that the liturgy followed in the south of England from the days of St Augustine was the Roman one, with but very few local deviations or additions. As to the fact itself there is no dissension among liturgical students. "Though St Gregory allowed St Augustine to choose or to combine," says the late Dr Forbes, "yet he seems to have introduced the Roman rite only, and adhesion to this was commanded by the Council of Clovesho in A.D. 747."\* The object of this decree was, as it explicitly states, to bring about uniformity. For the Scottish missionaries in parts of England had introduced a form of liturgy somewhat different from that of the Roman Church. The differences were probably much more in the Office than in the Mass, and were of no intrinsic importance. They had been tolerated for more than half a century out of respect to the holy men who introduced them, but the growth of the Church required a more uniform discipline. In the province of York the Scottish custom still lingered on in certain churches, but by the zealous efforts of Alcuin especially, the Roman Order was substituted before the end of the eighth century. He wrote to Eanbald II, Archbishop of York in 796: "Let not your clergy disdain to learn the Roman use (*ordines*), so that, imitating as far as in them lies the head of the Church of CHRIST, they may deserve to receive the eternal blessing of St Peter, the prince of the apostles, whom our LORD JESUS CHRIST appointed the head of His chosen flock."† A similar movement led in France to the substitution of the Roman use for the Gallican under Charlemagne. Walafrid Strabo, who died in 849, writes: "The Romans were taught their observances by St Peter, the prince of the apostles, but have added at different times what was judged appropriate. And the reason why so many nations admire their usages in sacred things is partly their apostolic origin and authority, and partly that no Church throughout the world, equally with the Roman, has remained pure from all contamination of heresy during all past centuries. . . . Wherefore there is no tradition equally to be followed, whether in the rule of faith or in that of ritual."‡

\* Introduction to the Arbuthnot Missal, by Dr Forbes (Anglican), Bishop of Brechin.

† Alcuini *Opera* (ed. Froben), Ep. 50; Haddan and Stubbs, III, 503. Also Ep. 171: "Numquid non habes Romano more ordinatos libellos sacratorios abundanter?"

‡ *De rebus eccles.*, cap 22, Migne, tom. CXLIV.

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Some few peculiarities were, however, adopted from the old Gallican liturgy, the principal of which was that a bishop when celebrating gave a very solemn benediction before communion. For this many sublime prayers were drawn up, varying with the festivals. The Benedictional of St Ethelwold, belonging to the tenth century, has fortunately been preserved. One specimen of these prayers will be enough to give some idea of their nature, and none will be more appropriate to the subject of this work than that for the Thursday in Holy Week, the day on which the institution of the Blessed Eucharist is commemorated. The bishop chanted as follows: \* “Bless, O LORD, we beseech Thee, this people whom Thou hast called to Thy supper. Amen.

“Protect them with the shield of Thy defence, since for them Thou hast designed to endure the outrages of Thy Passion. Amen.

“Defend them from the snares of the terrible serpent, and absolve them from all their guilt, since on this day Thou didst humble Thy Majesty to wash the feet of Thy disciples with Thy own hands. Amen.

“May the Almighty God bless you, who on this day at supper with His disciples consecrated, by His blessing, bread into His Body, and the chalice into His Blood. Amen.

“And may He grant you, with a conscience pure from all stain of sin, to celebrate with exultation the approaching festival of Easter, who when at table with His disciples said: ‘With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you.’ Amen.

“May He sanctify your souls, increase your life, adorn you with chastity, and enlighten your understandings in all good works. Amen.

“May He deign to do this, who reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

“The blessing of GOD the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, and the peace of our LORD be with you. Amen.”

These solemn benedictions belonged exclusively to the bishop, but in the remainder of the rite the prayers used by a simple priest differed in little or nothing from those of the pontiff.†

It may be asked whence the service books were procured; and the answer is that though they were preserved with great care and handed down as precious legacies, yet as a rule the candidates for the priesthood, during the time of their preparation, were expected to write them out with their own hands, and by this means they became thoroughly conversant with them. In the Prologue to his genuine Penitential, Archbishop Egbert (732–766) warns the ordinands as follows: “Now therefore, brethren, let him who wishes to receive priestly authority think seriously before God and get ready his arms before the hand of the bishop touches his head, i.e., his Psalter, his Lectionary, his Antiphonary, his Missal, his Baptismal Book, his Martyrology, for the whole year, for preaching with good works, and his Kalendar (*computum cum cyclo*). This is the law of priests. Afterwards his Penitential, that he may learn how to decide all causes.”‡ The canons of 967 order every priest to have a corrected book, and always to have it with him when he celebrates, not trusting to his memory, but keeping it before his eyes, lest he make mistakes.

To ensure correctness in the liturgy, St Boniface used to examine his priests during Lent in the Ritual, the Office, the Holy Mass and Catholic doctrine.§ And in England once at least, often twice, in the year, each priest was obliged

\* Gage’s edition, p. 76.

† Another peculiarity of the Anglo-Saxon Liturgy was that, though the canon of the Mass was almost, word for word, as it stands to-day in the Roman rite, the names of St George, St Benedict, St Martin and

St Gregory were inserted. [On the question of Celtic Liturgies see the article of Mr. H. Jenner in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, vol. III.]

‡ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 417.

§ *Ib.* 385.



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to attend the episcopal synod, taking with him one or two of his clerks, and one or two orderly laymen as servants; bringing at the same time the sacerdotal vestments, and whatever was necessary for the celebration of Mass, that his manner of performing the service might be approved.\*

Without any variation in the prayers of the liturgy, much ceremonial might be added; and the Anglo-Saxons had the same distinctions that are familiar to ourselves between a Low Mass, a High Mass, and a Pontifical Mass.

Of the Low Mass I merely remark that a server was prescribed to minister to the priest and make the responses in the name of the people. Yet Walafrid Strabo remarks that sometimes a priest might celebrate without a server. His words are these: "Though the Mass profits those who assist without communicating, and all who share the faith and devotion of the celebrant and communicants, and a priest may sometimes celebrate quite alone, yet the legitimate Mass is that at which the priest and server (*respondens*), offerer, and communicant all assist."† A case in which the server might be dispensed with was that of a hermit priest. The server at a Low Mass was generally a monk or cleric. Under the latter name were included not only those in holy orders, priests, deacons and subdeacons, but all who had received minor orders or merely the clerical tonsure. Of these there were multitudes throughout the country, and one or two were attached to even the smallest parish church. But to serve Mass was one of the first things taught to young scholars. In the Injunctions put forth by Queen Mary at the very beginning of her reign, one was that schoolmasters should instruct the children that they might be able to answer the priest at Mass, as had been the custom formerly.‡ Chantry foundations sometimes made provision for the support of the minister no less than the celebrant.

In no case was a woman allowed to serve at the altar,§ and this for reasons of evident propriety, not for any slight of the female sex, for perhaps in no nation were women held in greater esteem than among Anglo-Saxons, as in none did they show themselves more zealous for religion. It was by the help of Queen Bertha that St Augustine obtained the good will of her husband, Ethelbert. It was by Bertha's daughter, Edilberge, that St Paulinus at last won King Edwin to the faith. It was the refusal of Alcflede, daughter of King Oswin, to marry a pagan, that made the son of the obstinate Penda turn his thoughts to the Christian religion, and thus brought about the conversion of Mercia. Nothing is more strikingly beautiful in Bede than the devotion of those first English princesses, who became foundresses or inmates of monasteries. It was in England, also, that flourished the great double monasteries, separate indeed, yet both to a certain extent under the government not of an abbot but of an abbess.|| Yet this pre-eminence given to women by the English entailed no privileges at the altar, and the decisions of Archbishop Theodore continued to be observed which forbade women "to put the altar-cloths, or the oblations, or the chalice on the altar, or to stand among the clergy in the church." As a proof how strictly this discipline, introduced with the faith

\* Wilkins, *Conc.*, i, 225; iv, 785. Liebermann, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, i, 382 (44). It must be remembered that carriages, inns, and shops were unknown in those days. Hence servants on foot or horse were indispensable in travelling, to carry and prepare food, etc.

† *De rebus eccles.*, Migne, tom. cxiv., p. 951.

‡ Injunctio 17, anno 1553-4; Wilkins, iv, 90.

§ "Docemus ut altari mulier non appropinquet

dum missa celebratur."—Can. 44. anno 967.

|| On the origin and regulations of these double monasteries see Lingard, *A. S.*, i, 194. [It must not, of course, be supposed that the institution of double monasteries either originated in or was confined to England; see Bateson on "The Origin and Early History of Double Monasteries" in the Royal Historical Society's *Transactions*, vol. xiii, 1900, pp. 137-199.]

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into England, was observed down to the Reformation, I will give an extract from the rule of St Bridget as observed at the great monastery of Sion at Isleworth until its suppression by Henry VIII. The rule was the composition of the saintly Swedish widow who had restored, in the fourteenth century, the old institution of the double monasteries. One of the regulations was the following: "When the sacristan of the brethren's side has washed the corporals once, the nun who has care of the sisters' sacristy, with the help of her sisters shall wash them, dry them, fold them up, and deliver them again to the said brother; so that no sister wash nor touch any hallowed corporals with her bare hands, without linen gloves thereto ordained, nor starch them but with starch made of herbs only. If they do the contrary, they be straightly bound to tell it to the said sacristan of the brethren's side, that they be new washed and hallowed again."\*

From this digression regarding the exclusion of women from the service of the altar, if digression it is when discussing the subject of liturgy, let us now turn to the ceremonies of High Mass. In the first ages the bishop often was the only celebrant in a church where many priests were present; it is, therefore, probable that a Mass accompanied with impressive ceremonial was rather the rule than the exception, and that the Low Mass, shorn as it is of much of that ceremonial, must yield in antiquity to the High Mass. Rabanus Maurus, after minutely describing these ceremonies as practised at the end of the eighth century, adds: "The Roman Church keeps this order which she has received from the Apostles and apostolic men, and through almost the whole West all the Churches hold the same tradition."† What he describes is almost identical with what is known amongst ourselves as a High Mass. It is unnecessary, therefore, to enter into details.‡

I will merely mention that music, lights and incense were then as now made use of to enhance the solemnity of the Mass. It has been already observed that the words *missarum solemnity* by no means necessarily imply any unusual or accidental solemnity in the rights, and were used of a Low Mass as of a High Mass. So also the words *missam cantare* or *canere* do not necessarily imply the celebration of a musical or High Mass. The expression "to sing Mass" was constantly used when all the circumstances indicate that a Low or private Mass at a side altar is meant. To *sing* for some one's soul meant merely to celebrate; and thus a foundation even for Masses without note was a "chantry." An old rubric says: "Let them so end the service that each *sing* his Pater Noster apart," which meant that he was to recite it silently to himself.§ To sing, then, meant merely to recite religiously, or to "make melody in the heart to God." Sometimes, however, the word is used more technically of musical modulation. Thus Robert de Brunne writes:

And that day thou owest and shall  
For to hear thy service all,  
Matins, Mass hear, to read or sing. ||

And another old writer:

When the priest says, or if he sing,  
To him then give good hearkening. ¶

\* Rule of St Saviour, p. 367, printed as an appendix to Aungier's *History of Syon and Isleworth*.

† *De Cler. Inst.* i, 33.

‡ As to a Pontifical Mass in an Anglo-Saxon cathedral, those who are curious may consult the enthusiastic description of Dr Rock, *Church of our Fathers*.

§ Ratherius says: "Nullus solus missam cantet"; on

which Cardinal Bona remarks: "Cantare missam, priscorum phrasi, illi etiam dicebantur, qui sine cantu et privatim celebrant" (*Rer. Liturg.* lib. i, cap. 13). *The Mirror of our Lady*, p. 13, speaks "of song without note," i.e., simple recitation of the office.

|| *Handlyng Synne*, l, 821.

¶ *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 4.



# THE CEREMONIAL OF THE MASS

In many Masses then the priest intoned certain parts of the Mass while the choir sang others as at the present day. Bede tells us how the Gregorian chant was brought from Rome and taught throughout the island. Singing was much cultivated among the Anglo-Saxons, and instrumental accompaniments were not deemed out of place. Organs had been introduced into abbeys and cathedrals long before the Norman Conquest.\* I do not remember any mention of female voices except in the choirs of nuns. The office of singer was looked on as almost one of the minor orders, and there was a form prescribed for his admission into the choir: "Seethat what you sing with your mouth you believe with your heart, and that what you believe with your heart you obey in your works."

Lights were prescribed at Mass, though they were placed not upon but near the altar. The tenth canon of Ælfric says that: "the acolytes light candles at Mass, not so much to dispel darkness as in honour of CHRIST who is our light."† And the forty-second of Dunstan's Canons orders that a light must burn in the church when Mass is sung.‡ As this rubric regarded the church and not the altar itself, it is probable that for some time lights were not placed near each side altar, and that when Mass was said on a journey or in houses no candles whatever were necessarily lighted. Sometimes the number of lights at a solemn Mass was very great. The candles were invariably made of wax.

In order not to return to this subject I will here say a word as to the rules and customs of a later period. On ordinary days the custom seems to have been that at the principal Masses said at the high altar two candles should be lighted, and one at the side altars. Archbishop Walter Reynolds (1313-1328) enjoined that "at the time when the solemnities of Mass are performed two candles should be lighted or at least one." Myrc, in his Instruction to parish priests, says:

Loke that thy candel of wax hyt be,  
And set hyre so that thou hyre se  
On the lyfte half of thyn autere  
And loke algate ho brenne clere.

The number of lights, however, was often more than two. King Henry the Eighth's chapel on the Field of the Cloth of Gold had ten candlesticks of gold on the altar. Generally at High Mass on feast days even in smaller churches there stood two candles on the altar and two in larger candlesticks at the side. The number was much greater in abbeys and cathedrals. At Chichester in the thirteenth century the custom was to have on great festivals seven tapers of two pounds each on the altar, eight on the beam above it, and two on the altar step. On minor festivals there were five lights on the altar and two on the step, and on ordinary days three on the altar and two on the step. A number of smaller tapers were occasionally added, but these were not necessarily of wax.§

As to incense, Archbishop Theodore in the seventh century writes: "Incense must be burnt on saints' days, because like lilies they send forth an odour of sweetness, and perfume the Church of God, as a church is perfumed with incense at first round the altar, i.e., at its dedication." St Aldhelm in the same century, in his poetical description of a great church recently built, speaks of the "thurible of elaborately worked metal (*capitellis undique cinctum*)

\* That at Winchester was blown by sixty men.

† Wilkins, i, 250.

‡ *Ib.* i, 225.

§ See *Archæological Journal*, vol xxxv, p 386.

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hanging from the roof and sending forth smoke and sweet odours when the priests offered Mass”:

Quando sacerdotes missas offerre jubentur. \*

This line shows that the incense was not merely burnt in the churches to grace the festival days, but especially offered in the solemnity of the Holy Sacrifice.† Liturgical commentators of the ninth century tell us that it was burnt during the singing of the Gospel by the deacon at the ambo, and that the thuribles were waved round the altar by the subdeacons after the bishop had intoned the Creed. In a word, the principle of the Anglo-Saxon Church was that of the Catholic Church in all ages, to dedicate whatever is costly or beautiful to the worship of God, as far as circumstances will allow, and to symbolize and set forth by every means in her power not merely her faith in the Real Presence of her Spouse, but still more her loving adoration, gratitude and joy.

## CHAPTER V. LITURGICAL CHANGES

**A**MONG the changes which have taken place in the celebration and ministration of the Holy Eucharist, that of liturgy holds so prominent a position in history, that there is some danger of overrating its extent. The following correspondence belonging to the eleventh century may serve to show what were then the limits of divergence between various churches.

Walram, Bishop of Naumburg, wrote a sententious letter to St Anselm, complaining that, whereas the Church is one, there were many diversities in the ceremonies of Holy Mass in different countries. He enumerates three: firstly, the use of fermented bread by the Armenians; secondly, the custom of making a single cross over both the bread and the cup, instead of one over each as prescribed by ancient tradition and by the *Ordo Romanus*; and thirdly, that some cover the chalice with the corporal, or with a cloth folded to represent the napkin which lay apart in our LORD's tomb. He asserts that Christians should not represent our LORD's burial, but His death; and, as He died naked, so ought His body to be immolated uncovered on the altar.

To some it may appear that the good German bishop had no real difficulties to propose after all, and that he merely wanted to get a letter from the great scholar whose fame was in all the Churches. Perhaps St Anselm suspected this too, yet he wrote a courteous and interesting answer. “Certainly,” he says, “if throughout the whole Church there were one harmonious mode of celebration, it would be good and praiseworthy. Since, however, there are many diversities which do not affect the substance of the Sacrament, nor its efficacy, nor our faith, I think we ought rather to agree to tolerate them in peace, than to cause scandal and disagreement by condemning them. We have learnt from the holy fathers that, provided the unity of charity be preserved in the Catholic faith, diversity of customs hurts us not. If you ask

\* The thurible described by St Aldhelm is very like one mentioned in the life of Pope Sergius, and which the saint may have seen when he was in Rome during that Pope's pontificate. “Hic fecit thymiatherium aureum majus cum columnis et cooperculo, quod suspendit ante imagines tres aureas B. Petri Apostoli, in quo incensum et odor suavitatis festis diebus, dum missarum solemnia celebrantur, omnipotenti Deo

opulentius mittitur” (*Liber Pontificalis* in Migne, tom. LXXXIX, col. 25). Cardinal Bona proves the apostolic origin of the use of incense (*Rerum Liturg.* lib. I, cap. 25).

† Gemmulus, a Roman deacon, sent St Boniface, when in Germany, some cozumbrum of wonderful fragrance to offer to God morning and evening, and when he celebrated Mass (Letters of St Boniface, Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 755).



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whence such variety of customs originates, I can only answer, that it is from the diversity of human sentiments. They do not differ in the truth of the matter nor in its effects, but only in what is apt and fitting in administration." Walram had said that our LORD had blessed the bread and wine separately, therefore the priest should never make a single cross over both host and chalice. St Anselm replies that there is no greater departure from our LORD's institution than in not sacrificing after supper or towards evening, and that the matter is evidently of no importance. So, also, if Walram must imitate so closely by the uncovered chalice our LORD crucified naked, he must also offer Mass outside the city or in the open air. "True, our LORD was so poor that, coming into this world, He was born in a stable and laid in a crib, during his life He had no place to lay His head, when dead his shroud and tomb were gifts. But these things are better imitated in our personal conduct, if circumstances permit, than in the bareness of the sacrifice."\*

St Anselm in the above letter recommends toleration of diversity within certain limits. These limits are easily fixed. There must be nothing in liturgy or ceremonial contrary to faith or edification, and nothing that would be a serious hindrance to unity of action, between those who are called to act together. It belongs to legitimate authority to declare when this is the case; and as it would be the part of pride or uncharitableness to find fault where authority is silent, so is it pride and schismatical obstinacy to cling to customs once tolerated and lawful, after authority has abrogated them.

Ritual and liturgy have had their epochs and phases like theology. In theology the period of the martyrs and apologists was succeeded by that of the great fathers and doctors. That season of spontaneous and tropical growth was not to last many centuries. It was followed in due course by that of the scholastics who sorted, sifted and classified what they had received, and by the mystical contemplatives. Then came the writers of methodical ascetic treatises and the rest. So has it been with ritual and liturgy. These are created by certain influences, modified and regulated by others. I will borrow here the words of a thoughtful and learned Anglican writer: "The same frame of mind," he writes, "which sought with careful reverence for mystical meanings beneath the letter of Holy Scripture, found vent in devising new significant ceremonies for their ecclesiastical offices, which might embody in many different ways their feelings of lowliness and gratitude. The leisure of the great religious communities and the number of clergy, would afford many opportunities for this. And there probably were periods in which a craving for change came over the Church, which is indicated historically by the rise of new monastic Orders, and was probably accompanied by liturgical developments also. It is not to be wondered at if some of these were not altogether judicious, and there would arise a need for some great liturgical scholar to select and methodize the various rites and ceremonies which had come into local observance."†

In the canon of the Mass change was rarely attempted, and when bishops and great monasteries introduced varieties or developments of their own it was in ceremonial, in collects and prefaces, in the psalmody, or in the ritual and pontifical. St Osmund, who was Bishop of Sarum (1078-1099), finding that considerable variety had grown up in the course of centuries, drew up for his own church a Customary, or book of regulations of the divine offices,

\* *Opera*, tom. 1, 204-207 (ed. Gerberon).

† *Introduction to the Arbutnot Missal* (p. 58), by Dr Forbes, Anglican bishop of Brechin

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which before many years spread through the greater part of England, and by the efforts of Bishop Gilbert, of Limerick, and St Malachy, of Armagh, was soon adopted in Ireland.\* As to Scotland, Blind Harry, a poet of the fifteenth century, says that Edward I caused the old Scotch liturgical books, "the Roman bukis that then was in Scotland," to be brought to Scoon, and there he burnt them, and thenceforth "Salysbery oyss (use) our clerkis has tane." Boece has copied this story, but there is not a word of truth in it. Father Thomas Innes has shown from the records of Glasgow, Murray and Dunkeld that the Sarum use was brought into Scotland long before King Edward's time, and by the bishops, *motu proprio*, at the earnest request of their canons and chapters.†

A reformation, however, of some kind had been made in Scotland with regard to the Mass, even at an earlier date. Theodoric relates that "in some places among the Scots there were persons who, contrary to the custom of the whole Church, had used to celebrate Masses according to some barbarous rite (*nescio quo ritu barbaro*), which Queen Margaret, kindled with zeal for God, so laboured to destroy and bring to nothing, that henceforth there appeared no one in the whole race of Scots who dared to do such a thing." Theodoric, unfortunately, does not say in what the barbarousness of the rites consisted, and we know how enormous even a slight difference in ceremonial appeared to some in those days. The priests guilty of the barbarous rites were the Culdees,‡ and from the fact that the Culdee books were transferred to the Austin canons for their use, it follows that, if the reform really in any way touched the Holy Sacrifice, the peculiarities consisted in ceremonial, not in liturgy.§

But what change did St Osmund make in the Mass? None at all, says Dr Rock. "No essential change," says Dr Forbes, "and certainly none in which any doctrinal bias is discernible." The same may be said of all the other liturgies or "uses" that prevailed in England until the sixteenth century, whether they have grown out of the Sarum or are relics and modifications of forms previously in use. The York, Hereford, Bangor and Lincoln uses were the principal. Perhaps Durham had a special rite,|| and St Paul's, London, at least for a time.¶

Certainly no one ever dreamt of changing a single prayer in the canon of the Mass, which remained throughout the Middle Ages, amidst all varieties and changes, and still remains, what St Gregory left it.

Greater freedom was allowed in what preceded and followed the canon, a

\* [There is no direct evidence to connect St Osmund with the liturgical code known as the Consuetudinary of Sarum. It is not improbable that it embodies some earlier customs traditionally associated with his name, but the earliest existing directions for Church ceremonial at Salisbury are of much later date. St Osmund's importance and the special prestige which attached to the Sarum rite seem to be derived from the constitution of the secular cathedral chapter of that see, which probably supplied the model for other similar constitutions and which was known as the "Institutio Osmundi" (see Frere, *Use of Sarum*, vol. I, pp. 13-18 and 259; see also Bradshaw and Wordsworth, *Lincoln Cathedral Statutes*, vol. II, p. 46, etc.)]

† See *Spalding Club Miscellany*, II, 365.

‡ On the Culdees see Dr Reeves' *Essay*; also Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, and Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, vol. II.

§ This inference is drawn by Haddan and Stubbs

(*Councils*, vol. II, part I, p. 228), and by Rev. M. Walcott (*The Ancient Church of Scotland*), p. 521.

|| See Canon Simmons's *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 260.

¶ In 1414 it was agreed to abandon the *usus S. Pauli* for the Sarum. [It is noteworthy that previously to this the clergy of the London church of St Giles, Cripplegate, had obtained a bull from Pope Gregory XI in 1376 authorizing them to adopt the Sarum rite "which was used in the chapel of the Archbishop of Canterbury," and almost universally in the south of England. The separate existence of the Lincoln use is in itself doubtful, but it is distinctly mentioned in the Preface to the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. Probably any difference between Sarum and Lincoln or Sarum and St Paul's existed rather in the Office than in the Mass. See Dr Wickham Legg in *Transactions of St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, vol. VI, pp. 94-96. On the principal points of divergence between the English uses and that of Rome, see further at the end of this chapter.]



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freedom which had sometimes to be restricted. In 1173, Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, in a Council at London, forbade all prefaces "except the ten which Rome, the Mother of the Church, sings."\*

In the course of centuries, very many exquisite prayers or collects have been composed, some of which may still be said according to the devotion of the celebrant at certain Masses. John, the twenty-first abbot of St Albans, issued a decree to his monks "that in the celebration of private Masses, or even conventual, the number of collects should never exceed seven, because it is enough, and also for the dignity of that number."† This is now the rule throughout the Church.

As regards difference of ceremonial, the Mass with deacon and subdeacon, and accompanied by singing, was called then, as now, a High Mass (*missa alta, magna, summa* or *solemnis*). In contradistinction to this was the Low Mass (*missa sine notâ* and *privata*). It was forbidden to say Mass without a clerk or server, except in very exceptional circumstances. There are many names by which certain Masses were popularly known. The "morrow Mass" was the Mass said early in the morning. The "JESUS Mass," a very favourite one in later days, was that of the name of JESUS; the Lady Mass, one of votive Masses of our Lady. Some Masses were in such request by the people that we find them printed in the Rituals and Breviaries at the beginning of the sixteenth century. That of St Roch, the patron against the plague, sometimes occurs under two forms.

This may be the place to say a word about votive Masses and popular devotions. In an English Missal of 1523, the order assigned for votive Masses throughout the week is as follows: Sunday, of the Blessed Trinity; Monday, of the Holy Angels; Tuesday, the Mass called *Salus Populi* (against the plague or against war, for there were two Masses thus called); Wednesday, of the Holy Ghost, or a Requiem Mass; Thursday, of the Blessed Sacrament; Friday, of the Holy Cross, or of the Five Wounds; and Saturday, of the Blessed Virgin.

King Henry V ordered by his will that three Masses should be said daily for him to the world's end.‡ One of these, the second in order of celebration, was to be that appointed for the day. The first and third were as follows:

Sunday.	1. The Assumption.	3. Our LORD's Resurrection.
Monday.	1. The Annunciation.	3. The Holy Angels.
Tuesday.	1. Birth of our LORD.	3. Birth of our Lady.
Wednesday.	1. The Holy Ghost.	3. Our Lady's Conception.
Thursday.	1. Corpus CHRISTI.	3. Our Lady's Purification.
Friday.	1. The Holy Cross.	3. The Visitation.
Saturday.	1. All Saints.	3. Requiem.

Devotions of course varied. Richard, Earl of Warwick, by his will (A.D. 1425), thus expresses his pious feelings: "I will that in the chapel where my body be buried three Masses be sung every day, so long as the world shall endure, one of our Lady with note, according to the Ordinale Sarum; the second of Requiem without note; the third in this order: the Sunday, of the Trinity; Monday, of the Angels; Tuesday, of St Thomas of Canterbury; Wednesday, of the Holy Ghost; Thursday, of Corpus CHRISTI; Friday, of the Holy Cross; Saturday, of the Annunciation of our Lady; for the

\* *Teokesbury Annals*, p. 51.

† *Vite Abbatum* of Matthew Paris.

‡ The list is given by Fabian. (See his *Chronicle*, p. 589, ed. 1811.) It is taken from some Latin verses which Fabian incorrectly translates for the Monday.

Two Masses are given *Salutate Mariæ*. viz, on Monday and Friday. I have translated one the Annunciation, the other the Visitation. But I suspect a misprint, and that Friday's Mass was of our Lady's Compassion.

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performance of which I devise forty pounds of land per annum. Also I will that my executors treat with the Abbot and Convent of Tewkesbury, that in their monastery my obit be yearly kept; as also one Mass sung every day for my soul, which to be the first, if it might be; if not, then the last.”\* Many pages might be filled with similar documents.

Besides the devotion to special Masses, we find a curious and sometimes a superstitious devotion to certain Gospels said at the end of Mass. The first chapter of St John’s Gospel, *In principio*, etc., was not indeed added to the Roman missal before the sixteenth century. In later times the Sarum use prescribed it, but only to be said by the priest while returning from the altar. Still it was commonly used in some parts of England even in the twelfth century, and though it formed no part of the Mass, but was merely a private devotion added to it, people were exhorted to wait till it was said. Lydgate admonishes his readers when they hear it to make a cross on their mouths, then kiss wood, iron, stone or the earth,† kneeling on both knees at the words *Verbum caro factum est*. An old treatise on the manner of hearing Mass of the thirteenth or fourteenth century says: “A year and forty days at least—For *Verbum caro factum est*—To pardon have ye shall—Man or woman shall have this—That kneels down the earth to kiss.”‡

But Giraldus, writing towards the end of the twelfth century, complained § of a custom, or abuse, which had arisen in France and been condemned by synods. The celebrant used to say two or more Introits, Epistles and Gospels before he went on with the rest of the Mass. This was called a *missa conflata*, and was sometimes done to gratify the devotion of the priest or assistants, and sometimes to satisfy the celebrant’s avarice by getting more than one offertory, if we may believe Giraldus. In England the *missa conflata* was unknown, but Giraldus adds that a somewhat similar abuse had become established and called for the interference of bishops. Knights and other laymen asked the priest to say at the end a special Gospel to which they had a devotion, and failed not to make some offering. In connexion with this he quotes a popular proverb: “This tail does not belong to that calf”; and he tells a characteristic story of St Hugh of Lincoln, his contemporary and friend. “The bishop, entering a parish church, found that when the priest had come to the *Ite, missa est*, he began to repeat Gospels, first *In principio*, then *Spiritus Domini*, etc. The bishop on hearing this observed: ‘What will the priest say to-morrow, since he utters all he knows to-day?’”||

It is unnecessary to repeat what has been already said regarding the solemnities of High Mass, the use of lights, incense, and music. I will therefore give one or two facts illustrative of the period.

Among the silly objections which Æcolampadius heaped together against the Real Presence, one was that the proofs which God gives of His infinite charity do not love concealment, an objection which in the sense of the heresiarch might be brought against the Incarnation, against Creation and the very existence of God. But Fisher, after showing why our LORD in this sacrament both conceals His Presence out of love, and out of love reveals it, applies the words of his opponent in a better sense. “True,” he says, “the works of God’s love should not be

\* *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 232. Sir Ralph Shirley (p. 542), in 1513 wishes the Mass *Salus Populi* to be said both on Tuesday and Wednesday. Other examples will be given in the Chapter on Chantries.

† See part III, ch. 2, on the meaning of these kisses.

‡ The *Lay Folks’ Mass Book*, p. 146. Canon Simons (p. 383) quotes a German council of 1023,

alluding to the desire of the laity to hear special Gospels, amongst others the *In principio*.

§ *Gemma Eccl.* Dist. 1, cap. 48

|| *Ib.* Dist. 11, cap. 26, 1, 48. [St Hugh, however, fully approved and himself practiced the custom of reading a gospel over the sick, notably the *In principio*. This is still sanctioned by the *Rituale Romanum*.]



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concealed. Therefore is this sacrament celebrated so publicly, not that all may see CHRIST with their bodily eyes, but that believing Him to be present they may be forced to love Him by the immensity of the gift."\*

Founded on this principle was the whole of the Church's ceremonial. Hence the lights used around our LORD'S Presence were not to dispel darkness, but to symbolize faith and joy. Bishop Grandisson, for example, in his church of Ottery St Mary's ordained that a lamp of oil should burn all day and a mortar or cresset by night (since it does not burn out so soon as a lamp), in a proper and convenient place, in honour of the Body of CHRIST. Several tapers were arranged on elegant beams near the high altar. At least two were to be on that of the Blessed Virgin, and one for Mass on the other altars. The tapers on our Lady's altar were to be lighted not only during her Mass, but at her antiphon after Compline. Two torches were to be lighted at High Mass and at our Lady's Mass at the elevation. After these and other dispositions the bishop continues: "Lest these lights which we have ordained to the honour of GOD and the mother of the Eternal light shall ever, which GOD forbid, be withdrawn or diminished by the carelessness, or malice, or avarice of those who, as sons of darkness, seek rather their own than what belongs to JESUS CHRIST, we have made the above regulations. If any inspired by GOD's grace increase the luminary, may GOD increase their light here and hereafter, and may eternal light shine upon them. But as to those who take away these lights, may they fall into the outer darkness where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, unless they quickly repent."†

On the subject of lights in the larger churches I could multiply quotations indefinitely, but here the principle is more important than the precise usage. One example more will suffice. In 1296, Edward I endowed the monastery of Durham with £40 a year, on condition that on each of the two feasts of St Cuthbert the monks should have an extra pittance at the cost of £2 10s. and give to 3,000 poor a penny each, in all £25. On each of these feasts two great tapers of twenty pounds of wax each were to burn before the altar, and smaller ones on other feasts. A monk was also to celebrate daily in the Galilee for the king.‡

After reading the regulations made in cathedrals, monasteries, collegiate and parish churches, the reflection arises that some flourishing trades must have been almost ruined by the Reformation. The goldsmiths indeed found occupation in melting down chalices and pyxes to be reshaped, a few into communion cups, and by far the greater number into drinking goblets, but the vestment-makers and the chandlers must have been compelled to seek other occupations. There were no more orders given for enormous Easter tapers towering to the roof, as at Durham, § called Judas candles, because of the wax figures of Judas hanging from them; nor for Gild candles, sometimes round, sometimes square, adorned with painted flowers of wax. || Even the humbler purchases of parish church and country chapel came to an end. How many poor cottagers lost by the change the profit of their beehives! For as the supply of wax was limited and the demand very great, the price paid for wax in the Middle Ages as compared with other articles was enormous. A large candle cost as much as a fat sheep. The account books of the parish of Heybridge in the time of Henry VIII contain entries like the following: For two pounds of wax against Christmas, 1s. 8d.; for striking of the

\* *De Veritate Corp.* l. 1, cap. 12. The prophet Isaiah cries: "Verily thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour," yet God answers immediately: "I have not spoken in secret in a dark place of the earth. I have not said to the seed of Jacob: Seek me in vain" (Isai. xlv, v. 15, 19).

† Oliver's *Monasticon Exoniense*, p. 273.

‡ Dugdale, i, 244.

§ *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Soc.), p. 9.

|| In the *Sixth Report of the Historical MSS. Commission*, part 1, p. 600, the papers of a Winchester Gild.

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said wax, 1½d.; for two pounds of tallow candle against the same feast, 2½d.; for eight pounds of wax against Easter, 6s. 8d.; for half a pound of frankincense, 4d.; for a pound of frankincense, 4d.\*

John Molyneux, priest and rector of the parish of Walton-on-the-Hill (formerly the parish church to which Liverpool was a succursal), was the third son of Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton, who was knighted at Agincourt. At his funeral many priests and other guests were invited. The bill of expenses has been published.† The bread cost but 4d., the ale 9d., the wine 2s. 4d.; the ox, with the expenses of the butcher, only 10s. 4d., the cook, brought over from Chester, 1s.; while for six torches weighing two pounds each were paid 12s., and for six tapers 3s.

Oil, which had to be imported, was no less expensive. The churchwardens' accounts of the parish of Hedon in Holderness in the year 1454 state that "for six gallons of oil bought for the lamps hanging before the Body of JESUS CHRIST in the choir of the chapel of St Augustine," they paid 5s. 2d.‡ The cost of incense was naturally very great. The consumption of incense during the year 1279 in St Paul's, in London, amounted to eighteen-and-a-half pounds' weight of the best, at 10d. a pound; eight pounds at 9d., and nine-and-a-half pounds at 7d.§ To have an equivalent in modern money we may multiply these prices by twelve or even twenty, so that both wax and incense were four or five times their present value. It is not, therefore, surprising that those who were generous and devout made bequests to procure these expensive articles to their churches. From the Bridlington registers it appears that Ralph de Goxa gave to the church of Sproatley in Holderness two oxgangs of land to provide incense for the high altar.|| Henry III directed the Lord Treasurer to feed 15,000 poor people in St Paul's churchyard on the festival of St Paul's conversion, 1244, and to provide 15,000 tapers then to be placed within the Church. Richard de Beames, Bishop of London, 1108-1128, endowed St Paul's with certain revenues to purchase 300 lbs. weight of wax annually for six lamps to burn continually.¶ These were gifts to great cathedrals, but each parish had its stock of cattle presented by the parishioners or purchased by their gifts, and fed on the parish land, the proceeds of which were applied by the churchwardens to the purchase of wax lights, according to the intentions of the donors. When the chantries were confiscated by Henry VIII and Edward VI the foundations for lights went also to the Crown, and the curse of Bishop Grandisson and others fell upon these sons of darkness.

For those who do not possess any reprint of the old English uses\*\* mentioned above, we may here add a short account of their principal variations:

Before the Confiteor (said at the foot of the altar), the Sarum, Hereford and York uses placed the Kyrie Eleison and Pater Noster. The Sarum added Ave Maria. In the Hereford alone the prayers that preceded the Confiteor were said at the foot of the altar; in the others they were said in the sacristy or while coming from it.

The Confiteor was very short: "I confess to God, to Blessed Mary, to all saints and to you, that I have sinned grievously in thought and in deed, through my fault. I beseech B. Mary, all the saints and you to pray for me." The absolution was: *Absolutionem et remissionem omnium peccatorum vestrorum, spatium veræ*

\* *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 163, 166, 168.

† *Lan. Chan.*, ed Canon Raines (Chet. Soc.), p. 81.

‡ Poulson, *History of Holderness*, II, 166.

§ *Archæol. Journal*, III, 252.

|| Poulson's *Holderness*, II, 277.

¶ Dugdale's *St Paul's*, pp. 7, 16.

\*\* See for example Maskell's *Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England*, 3rd edit, Oxford, 1882.



# LITURGICAL CHANGES

*pœnitentiæ, emendationem vitæ, gratiam et consolationem Sancti Spiritus tribuat vobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus.*

Among the short verses and responses after the Confiteor, in the Hereford use, was one to the Blessed Virgin: *Sancta Dei Genitrix, virgo semper, Maria; intercede pro nobis.*

In the Sarum use the celebrant gave the kiss of peace to the deacon and sub-deacon before ascending the steps. The altar was kissed, but no mention made of the relics.

The Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Collects, Epistle, Gospel and Creed followed as in the Roman use, with very slight differences. On some festivals the Kyrie was expanded into a "trope," and on the feasts of our Lady the Gloria in Excelsis was interpolated with versicles in her honour. This was called a "farsura."

In the York use the Offertory was sung by the celebrant with his ministers. The prayers at the offertory and incensing were shorter in the English uses than in the Roman, but the intention of offering sacrifice for the living and dead was expressed in all. In the Sarum rite the bread and wine were offered with one prayer, in the York rite with two. In the York and Hereford, the hymn "Veni Creator" was said after the washing of the hands.

The oblations were blessed with the sign of the Cross, in the York use with three crosses, but the blessing followed the washing of hands; in the Roman it precedes.

The *Orate, fratres*, with mention of *meum ac vestrum*, was in all, though the response of the ministers varied.

Then followed the Secret Prayers and the Preface. After the Sanctus some copies of the York Missal direct the celebrant to kiss the crucifix with the words *Adoramuste, Christe*, etc. Indeed, this was done throughout England, though not mentioned in the rubric. The crucifix kissed was sometimes that represented in the *Mass Book* before the Canon.

The Canon is word for word the same in all as in the Roman, though there are variations in the rubrics. After the consecration the priest prayed with his arms extended, while he commemorated our LORD's "blessed Passion."

The mingling of the Body and Blood by placing the sacred particle in the chalice took place in the English uses after the Agnus Dei.

The Pax was given with the words *Pax tibi et ecclesiæ*, in the Sarum; *Habete vinculum caritatis et pacis, ut apti sitis sacrosanctis mysteriis Dei*, in the York and Hereford; to which in the Hereford was added: *Pax Christi et sanctæ Ecclesiæ tibi et cunctis Ecclesiæ filiis.*

The prayers before communion varied somewhat, nor were the words with which the celebrant communicated himself the same in all. In the Sarum use, before receiving the Sacred Body, the priest said: *Ave in æternum sanctissima caro Christi, mihi ante omnia et super omnia summa dulcedo.* And before receiving the precious Blood: *Ave in æternum cælestis potus, mihi ante omnia et super omnia summa dulcedo.*

The two ablutions were made and the Mass concluded as now, but no benediction of the people is mentioned. In the Hereford Missal is a prayer for blessing the people with the empty chalice at the principal feasts and on doubles: *Adju-torium, etc., Qui fecit. Sit Nomen, etc. Ex hoc nunc, etc. Oremus—Benedicat vos divina Majestas et una Deitas, Pater+et Filius+et Spiritus+Sanctus. Amen.* In Sarum the priest recited the gospel *In principio* while returning to the sacristy. In the York and Hereford uses it is not prescribed.

# THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

## CHAPTER VI. LAY-PRAYERS AND THE ELEVATION

IT has been said in a former chapter that in no period in Great Britain was the Mass offered in the vernacular language. The Briton, the Scot, the Pict, the Saxon, the Dane, the Norman, all listened to the same majestic and changeless Latin. The fact that even one island has been peopled by so many races speaking different tongues, and that each of those tongues was undergoing continual and rapid change, would alone be enough to convince a thoughtful man of the almost absolute necessity of such a discipline.

But it will be asked: How then could the people take any intelligent part in public worship? What was done to meet the difficulty arising from a strange tongue? In a word, how did the people hear or assist at Mass? I reply that throughout the Middle Ages men heard Mass as they do now, with perfect liberty, according to each one's capacity or devotion. Some prayed from their own hearts, some used their beads, some prayer-books. Some were melted into tears or rapt in contemplation of our LORD's Passion, while others gazed and stared about, admired or envied their neighbours' dress or disturbed the priest and the worshippers with their chattering and jangling.

Giraldus merely says: "In hearing Mass every one should show this reverence, to apply his mind to the work, to think of God only, so that the words *Sursum Corda*, *Habeamus* [*sic*] *ad Dominum*, may be fulfilled. When the Gospel is read they should not sit,\* but, standing reverently with the body inclined, should listen. After the Gospel let those offer who have the will, according to the words, 'Let them not appear empty before My face.' Let them not presume to leave until after the priest has raised his hands in blessing."†

This, however, was an instruction given to priests, and it left to them the care and the discretion of teaching their people *how* they were "to apply their minds to the work, and to put away every thought but that of God." We cannot judge directly of the oral instruction given to the unlettered, but manuscripts have survived both in old French and early English which prove that, for those who could read their own language, forms of devotion were provided as well as instructions and exhortations.

In the first place it was the custom throughout England, at the parochial Mass on Sundays, for the priest, after the Offertory, to turn to the people and read the Bidding Prayer, by which their intentions were directed to the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. This was a custom common to the early and to the later English Church. The Saxon form was shorter than that afterwards used. It is thus modernized by Canon Simmons: ‡ "Let us pray God Almighty, heaven's high King, and St Mary and all God's saints, that we may God Almighty's will work, the while that we in this transitory life continue; that they us uphold and shield against all enemies' temptations, visible and invisible: Our Father.

"Let us pray for our Pope in Rome, and for our King, and for the Archbishop and for the Alderman; and for all those that to us hold peace and friendship on the four sides towards this holy place; and for all those that us for pray within the English nation, or without the English nation: Our Father.

\* This shows that seats were not unknown even in the body of the church in the twelfth century.

† *Gemma Eccl.* Dist. i, cap. 7.

‡ *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 63. Canon Simmons prints

five forms belonging to the northern province. The Rev. H. O. Coxe printed many more in *Forms of Bidding Prayer with Introduction and Notes*. See also Rock's *Church of our Fathers*, iv, 192; ii, 363, 367.



# LAY PRAYERS AND ELEVATION

“Let us pray for our gossips [*Godmothers*] and for our Godfathers, and for our gild-fellows and gild-sisters, and all those people’s prayer who this holy place with alms seek, with light and with tithe; and for all those whom we ever their alms receiving were during their life and after life: Our Father.

“Pray we for [*here the bede-roll was recited*]. For Thorferth’s soul pray we a Pater Noster, and for many more souls, and for all the souls that baptism have undertaken, and in CHRIST believed from Adam’s day to this day: Our Father.”

Thus the people were taught that the Church was one from the beginning to the end; that its oneness came from CHRIST, since to Him the ancients looked forward as we look back, though by baptism we enjoy higher privileges and a visible Catholic communion. They were taught that as CHRIST is the Head and Centre of communion for the living and the dead, for all times and all places, so the Bishop of Rome is the head and centre of visible unity on earth.

In later times the Bidding Prayer was usually divided into three parts, at the end of each of which the priest turned again to the altar, and with the clerk said or sang certain prayers, in Latin, while the people recited the LORD’s Prayer, Angelic Salutation, and Creed in English.

The following is the form used in York at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the language being somewhat modernized.

“We shall make a special prayer unto GOD Almighty, and to the glorious Virgin His mother, our Lady St Mary, and to all the glorious company of heaven, for the state of all holy Church and for the peace of the realm; and for all that are true to the king and to the crown. We shall pray for our holy father the Pope of Rome and all his true cardinals. And specially for the Holy Cross that GOD was done (to death) upon, that GOD of His mercy bring it out of the heathen men’s hands into Christian men’s keeping. We shall pray for our holy father the archbishop of this see, and for all bishops, abbots, priors, monks, canons and for all manner of men and women of religion, that GOD give them good perseverance in honest and clean religious living. We shall pray for the parson of this church,” and so the prayer continues for all the clergy, for the king, queen, lords and commons. “We shall pray for all those that worship (i.e., honour) this church or any other with book, bell, vestment, chalice, altar-cloth or towel, for all who uphold the work of the church, for all who find torch, taper or lamp, in worshipping of GOD or of our Lady or of any of GOD’s saints.” Then for all parishioners, for all who are in debt or mortal sin, and for all good livers. “And that these prayers may be heard and sped the sooner through your prayers, every man and woman that here is help them heartily with a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria.”

Then the priest recited the sixty-sixth Psalm, with versicles and three collects. The celebrant proceeded, “Ye shall kneel down devoutly on your knees and make a special prayer unto our Blessed Lady St Mary and to all the fellowship of heaven, for all the brethren and sisters of our mother church, St Peter of York, St John of Beverly, St Wilfrid of Ripon and St Mary of Southwell.” Then for the sick, for the reward of those who “paid their dues,” and the amendment of those who did not, “for all the pilgrims and palmers wheresoever they be on water or on land, that GOD of His goodness grant them part of our good prayers and us part of their good pilgrimages”; then for husbandmen, for the land and good weather, for women with child.\* “We shall pray for them that this day gave bread to this church to be made

\* In the southern form it was thus: “For all women that be in our Lady’s bonds, that Almighty GOD may send them grace, the child to receive the sacrament of baptism, and the mother purification” (Apud Rock).

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holy bread of. For them and for us, and for all that have need of good prayers, in worship of our Lady and of her five joys, every man and woman say in the honour of her five times, Ave Maria." While this was being said the choir chanted the anthem, "Ave, Regina cœlorum," or "Regina cœli, lætare," according to the season.

The last part of the exhortation regarded the dead, "Ye shall pray for your fathers' souls, your mothers' souls, godfathers' souls, godmothers' souls, and for all the souls whose bones are buried in this church or in this churchyard, that God of His mercy release them of their pain if it be His blessed will." While the people said a Pater and an Ave the priest chanted the "De profundis" with the versicles and prayers.

The sermon followed, and then the Mass continued; and it must be acknowledged that with such an instruction Sunday after Sunday the people would well appreciate the meaning of the Communion of Saints, and would be at no loss for subjects of prayer while assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, even though they could do little more than say Paters and Aves, with or without the help of their beads. "You must teach them," says Myrc to the parish priest, "that when they to the church fare, they leave their many words—Their idle speech and nice bordes,—And put away all vanity,—And say their Pater Noster and Ave,—And none in church stand shall,—Nor lean to pillar or to wall—But fair on knees they shall them set,—Kneeling down upon the flat—And pray to God with heart meek, to give them grace and mercy eke."\* So, too, in the book *How the Good Wife taught her Daughter*, in the old Scotch dialect, the maiden is to

Be ot gud prayer, quhen scho may  
And heir Mess on the haly day;  
For mekill grace cumis of praying,  
And bringis men ay to gud ending.  
And in the kirke kepe our (i.e., above) all thing  
Fra smyrking, keking, and baklukiŋ.  
And after noyne on the haly day  
Owthir pray or sport at honest play.†

I will now give an outline of the instructions and prayers which Canon Simmons has entitled *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, and which differ from the prayers contained in the Primers or Laymen's Prayer Books especially in this, that the latter are mostly authorized liturgical prayers or else translations, whereas the prayers to be said during Mass are private compositions. They differ from those in our ordinary modern English Missals and Prayer Books, in that both rubrics and prayers are in rhyme. The prayers are seldom translations of those of the liturgy, though they are in harmony with their character and object. Several copies exist of this book, or rather several variations and adaptations of an older English rhyme which Canon Simmons believes to have been itself a translation of an original in Norman French, made in the twelfth century. Mr Bentley published some years ago some very beautiful Norman prayers to be said during Mass, and some of these are in rhyme; ‡ so that this manner of praying would appear to have been in favour both with the French and English-speaking aristocracy, and with the lay members of religious orders, male and female, for to such persons the copies which have come down to us were adapted.

\* *Instructions for Parish Priests* (E. E. T. Soc.), L. 264 sq.

† Printed at the end of *The Bruce*, part III (E. E. T. Soc.), p. 532.

‡ Bentley's *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 406–409:

"Je vos honore seynt sacrement  
Vos honore sank et corps  
Me donez garder deijs et hors, etc."



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To confine ourselves to one version. The priest is supposed to vest at the altar, as he would probably do in the oratories of noblemen, or even in many parish churches which had no sacristies. The people kneel. The author in red letter explains what the priest does at the foot of the altar, and exhorts his reader to shrive himself, i.e., to confess his sins together with the priest and the Mass server, saying the Confiteor. I give his translation of this as a specimen. "I know to GOD, full of might—And to His mother, maiden bright—And to all hallows here—And to thee, father ghostly—That I have sinned largely—In many sins sere—In thought, in speech, and in delight—In word and work I am to wite—And worth to blame—Therefore I pray St Mary—And all hallows holy—In GOD's name—And the priest to pray for me—That GOD have mercy and pity—For His manhede—Of my wretched sinfulness—And give me grace and forgiveness—Of my misdeed." Pater, Ave, Credo.

The assistant is then told to stand after the Confiteor, when the priest is "at the south altar nook," and to pray for the celebrant that he may acquit himself well of the Mass; and also for all present and all living and dead for whom it is offered. The Gloria in Excelsis is paraphrased and to be said by the assistant standing. He kneels at the collects and epistle and says Paters. At the Gospel he stands, makes a large sign of the cross, and says: "In the name of the Father, and Son, and the Holy Ghost,—A (i.e., one) soothfast GOD of might most—Be GOD's word welcome to me—Joy and louing (i.e., praise) LORD, be to Thee." If he could not follow the Gospel—and in the Middle Ages collections of the Mass gospels in English, though not unknown, were rare—he could at least say as follows: "JESUS mine, grant me Thy grace—And of amendment, might, and space—Thy word to keep and do Thy will—The good to choose and leave the ill—And that it so may be—Good JESU grant it me, Amen." The Creed is given in verses of eight or four syllables: "I trow in GOD, Father of might—That all has wrought—Heaven and earthē, day and night—And all of nought," etc. This change of metre is made either to avoid monotony or because the writer adopted a paraphrase already in popular use. At the Offertory the assistant may offer or not according to his devotion. The prayer commemorates the offerings of the Magi. When the priest asks prayers at the Orate, fratres, the layman replies: "The Holy Ghost in thee light—And send into thee right—Rule thy heart and thy speaking—To GOD's worship and his louing."

These specimens will suffice to make known this interesting devotion. Reserving the prayers said at the time of Consecration for another chapter, I will conclude this with the words our layman was told to say after the *Ite, Missa est*. "GOD be thanked of all His works—GOD be thanked of priests and clerks—GOD be thanked of ilk a man—And I thank GOD as I can."

While speaking of lay prayers it will not be out of place here to note the gradual evolution of a rite which, though small in its own nature, was at the same time of such significance as to almost take the place of all other lay prayers and substitute one great act of adoration. This rite was what is now known as the Elevation.

The practice of elevating the sacred Host immediately after the consecration is said to have originated in France in the eleventh century as a protest against the heresy of Berengarius.\* It was a ceremony so exactly in harmony

\* *History of the Mass*, by Rev. J. O'Brien, p. 332. *The Lay Folk's Mass Book*, notes by Canon Simmons, p. 281. [Although this idea that the Elevation was a protest against the heresy of Berengarius will be found in

many books, a closer investigation of the facts seems to show that the practice was not introduced until a century after Berengarius's death. There can be little doubt that the Elevation owes its origin to a dispute

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with the faith and feelings of Catholics and served so well the purpose of making an act of reparation of honour to our LORD outraged by the recent heresy, that it quickly spread throughout Europe, and in 1219 received the authoritative sanction of Pope Honorius III.\*

We find frequent mention of this rite in England. Thus the writer of the Annals of the Abbey of Waverley in Surrey relates that on Palm Sunday, 1245, Aleanor, sister of Henry III and wife of the great Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, visited that abbey together with her husband, and by papal dispensation entered the enclosure with her children and attendants. The chronicler thinks it was by special Providence that she entered the church just at the moment when the priest, saying the Mass of the Blessed Virgin at the high altar, was elevating the Host, "that He whose love had drawn her thither would thus show Himself promptly to her in His most loving Presence."†

At first the Host alone was elevated, but both Host and Chalice before the end of the thirteenth century. This second elevation, however, was not so strictly enjoined, and had not been adopted or had fallen into disuse in the great abbey of St Albans, until it was enforced by a decree of a general chapter in 1429.‡

Soto, who was in England in the reign of Mary, tells us that what the Spaniards called the Filiola, or what we now call the Palla, i.e., the small square covering of the chalice made of linen, was never in use here, but "a silk tablet" instead, which was removed when the chalice was raised aloft. I find no allusion to such an article in old inventories, unless the Bursa, or, as it was then called, the Corporax-case, was so used.§

The act of the priest was to be followed by corresponding ones in the laity. "Let laymen be admonished," wrote the Bishop of Durham in 1220, "to behave reverently during the consecration of the Eucharist, kneeling down, especially when the sacred Host is lowered after the elevation." || The provin-

among theologians as to the exact moment at which transubstantiation took place. Peter Comestor, and seemingly Peter the Chanter also, both of them Chancellors of Paris, held that no change was effected in either of the elements until the words of institution had been spoken both over the bread and over the wine. Their theological opponents, who formed the majority, maintained, on the contrary, that when the priest had said *Hoc est corpus meum*, the bread was at once transformed into the Body of CHRIST. It had long been the custom for the priest when he came to the words in the Canon: "Qui pridie quam pateretur accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas" (Who the day before He suffered took the bread into His holy and venerable hands), to take up the Host (*elevare hostiam*) and hold it at some height above the altar and to pronounce the words of consecration while it was still in that position. But when the controversy arose as to the precise moment of consecration, those who believed that the words *Hoc est corpus meum* were instantaneously operative, began to raise the Host higher after these words were spoken instead of replacing at once upon the corporal. By thus showing the Host to the people and accompanying the act with some external or at least internal act of reverence, they made a practical protest against the teaching of Peter Cantor and Peter Comestor, and equivalently invited the congregation to join them in their repudiation of this doctrine. Amongst the most distinguished of those who followed this practice may be counted Stephen Langton, then a professor

of theology in Paris, but afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal. The earliest collection of canons which directly prescribed an elevation of the Host after the words *Hoc est corpus meum* is that of Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris (1196-1208). That the practice cannot have been introduced very long before seems to be clear from the hesitating language of such writers as Innocent III and Giraldu Cambrensis. It will be noticed how readily this explanation fits in with the fact that the practice of elevating the chalice did not become at all general until many years after the introduction of the elevation of the Host. That CHRIST our LORD was present under both species after the words of institution had been spoken over the chalice was disputed by no one. The whole debate turned upon the question whether the Body of CHRIST was present immediately after the pronouncing of the words, *Hoc est enim corpus meum*. See a series of articles on "The Elevation," in *The Tablet*, Oct. 19, Oct. 26, Nov. 2, 1907.]

\* *Decret. Greg. IX*, l. III, tit. 41, c. 10.

† *Annales Monastici*, II, 336 (Rolls Ser.).

‡ *Amundesham*, I, 40 (Rolls Ser.). See also Bened. XIV, *De Sacr. Missæ*, l. II, cap. 15, n. 27-33.

§ "Quædam tabella serica ad cooperiendum calicem dum est in altari" (Soto in *IV Sent. dist. 13*, 9, 2, art. 5). [A folded corporal was used for the purpose.]

|| Wilkins, I, 579. [It need hardly be pointed out that the idea of kneeling down and showing reverence when the Host "is lowered after the elevation" belongs to a period when the practice of the elevation in our modern



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cial council of Oxford in 1222 decreed: "Let the laity be frequently reminded, that whenever they see the Body of the LORD carried out, they immediately kneel down as to their Creator and Redeemer, and with hands joined humbly pray, until He has gone past. And let them do this especially at the elevation of the Host, when the bread is transformed into the Body of CHRIST, and that which is in the chalice into His Blood, by the mystic blessing." \* A similar decree was issued by Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln in 1236,† and by many other bishops.

To call the attention of the people at this solemn moment of the Mass, a small bell was rung inside the church, and a larger one outside called the Sacring Bell, otherwise the Sancte, Saints, or Saunce Bell, for at a later period it was rung also at the Sanctus before the Canon of the Mass. Bishop Peter Quivil of Exeter, in 1287, says: "The Host should be raised so high as to be seen by the faithful bystanders; thus their devotion is increased and the merit of their faith. The parishioners should be exhorted that, at the elevation of CHRIST, they do not bend irreverently, but kneel and adore their Creator with all devotion and reverence. To this they shall be excited beforehand by the ringing of a little bell, and at the elevation the great bell should be struck thrice." ‡ The larger bell here mentioned hung outside, generally under a little turret on the gable at the east end



SANCTUS OR SAUNCE BELL

of the nave. It was placed outside the church that not merely those present around the altar, but even people at a distance, might be invited to assist in spirit at the great Mystery. The provincial council of Lambeth, 1281, says: "At the elevation of the Body of the LORD a bell must be struck on one side, that the people who are unable to be present daily at the celebration of Mass, wherever they may be, in the fields or at home, may kneel and gain the indulgences granted by many bishops." §

Mass had not yet been generally adopted. The Host was "elevated," i.e., raised breast-high above the altar, while the words, *Hoc est enim corpus meum* were spoken. Then the priest "lowered it," or, in other words, replaced it on the altar; but it was now worthy of adoration, as it had become the Body of JESUS CHRIST.]

\* *Ib.* 594.

† *Ep.* 52 (Rolls ed.).

‡ Wilkins, II, 131. [There seems to the present writer to be some reason for doubting whether the *sanctus* bell was the bell which Bishop Peter Quivil intended to be rung at the elevation. The *sanctus* bell was rung at the *Sanctus*, and was rung at that moment to enable those within the immediate neighbourhood of the church—e.g., loiterers

who were talking or amusing themselves in the churchyard—to enter the building in time to see the priest elevate the Body of CHRIST. It consequently was only intended to reach those who were close at hand, and its function, as the present writer conceives, was often supplied by a hand-bell rung through a low side window, opened for the purpose. On the other hand, "the great bell," which was to be rung at the moment of the elevation, was intended to reach the people at work in the fields. Consequently where this regulation was carried out as the canon directed, one of the largest bells of the church was probably used.]

§ Wilkins, II, 51. A writer in the *Archæol. Journal* for March, 1847, connects the low side windows often

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In the statutes drawn up by Dean Colet for St Paul's School we have an example of the carrying out of this practice. "There shall be in the school a priest, that daily as he can be disposed, shall sing Mass in the chapel of the school and pray for the children to prosper in good life and in good literature, to the honour of GOD and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. At his Mass, when the bell in the school shall ring to sacring, then all the children in the school kneeling in their seats shall with lift-up hands pray in the time of sacring. After the sacring, when the bell knelleth again they shall sit down again to their books learning."\* The statutes of the Brigittine nuns of Sion warn them, however, lest this good external act interrupt a better interior one.† "When the convent is at any conventual act, none shall presume of her own head to go out to see any sacring at any altar, but they shall keep their wonted observance, or else kneel down, if it be in the choir, and see our LORD in their souls, looking upon their books, that no default be made in reading or singing. For GOD loveth more to be worshipped and seen with the eyes of the soul than with the eyes of the body, saying our LORD: Veri adoratores adorabunt DEUM in spiritu et veritate."

In a similar spirit, Bishop Grandisson, of Exeter, in the statutes of Ottery St Mary's, writes: "No Mass is to be said during the Office of Prime, unless there be some special necessity, in which case we forbid the little bells (*campanellæ*) to be rung at the elevation of the sacrament, and those who are singing in choir must not go out nor turn aside to see the sacrament, but keep their attention devoutly fixed upon their office."‡

Less edifying were the complaints made by the monks of Daventry in 1390 against the very early and great ringing at the parish church. The monks, however, had risen much earlier, had sung the Divine Office, then gone to bed again, and their rest was broken by the bells. However, if it was hardly fair to disturb those who watched while others slept, neither was it fair to the laymen who rose early, or reverent to our LORD, to silence the bells altogether. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, acted as arbiter, and decided that the parishioners should ring "one convenable peal, and then ringing with one bell, and at the levation of the sanctment (i.e., consecration) of the same Mass three knellings only."§

Different forms of pious salutation were taught to the people to be used at this solemn moment of the Mass. In an old prayer-book or *Horæ* quoted by Mr Masskell, the *Ave verum* is recommended.|| The author of the *Ancren Riwle* composed at the beginning of the thirteenth century, says: "In the Mass, when the priest elevates GOD's Body, say these verses standing: 'Ecce salus mundi,' etc. Behold the Salvation of the world, the Word of the Father, a true Victim, living Flesh, whole Godhead, very Man, and then fall down with this greeting:

Ave Principium nostræ creationis!  
Ave Pretium nostræ redemptionis!  
Ave Viaticum nostræ peregrinationis! etc.

"But what room is there in me that my GOD should come to me, He who made heaven and earth? Is it so, O LORD my GOD? Is there in me anything which may contain Thee? Who will give me that Thou wilt indeed come into my heart to inebriate it?"

found in chancels with the ringing of this outside bell *in uno latere*. But it is the bell that is struck on one side or tolled. [The writer in the *Archæolog. Journal* is wrong in thinking that it was the elevation bell which was rung through the low side window. It was rather the *sanctus* bell, or bell of warning.]

\*Knight's *Life of Colet*, p. 306 (ed. 1823).

†Cap. xxii at p. 329 of Aungier's *History of Isleworth and Syon*.

‡*Monasticon Exoniense*, by Oliver, p. 270

§Baker's *Northampton*, p. 312.

||"Prayers to the Sacrament atte levacion" (*Monum. Rit.*, p. 157).



# LAY PRAYERS AND ELEVATION

Then the prayer continues at some length, and is very beautiful. \*

In his instruction to parish priests, John Myrc says:

And when they hear the bell ring—To that holy saking,—Teach them kneel down, both young and old,—And both their hands up to hold,—And say then in this manner,—Fair and softly without *bere* (i.e., noise):—JESU LORD, welcome Thou be—In form of bread as I Thee see;—JESU, for Thy Holy Name—Shield me to-day from sin and shame;—Shrift and housel, LORD, Thou grant me *bo* (i.e., both)—Ere that I shall hence go,—And very contrition of my sin—That I, LORD, never die therein;—And as Thou wert of a *May i-bore* (i.e., born of a maid)—Suffer me never to be forelore—But when that I shall hence wend—Grant me Thy bliss withouten end. Amen.—Teach them thus or some other thing—To say at the holy saking.†

These last words are noticeable. The people were taught forms of salutation, and, as a help to memory, these were often in rhyme. As this practice is worthy of imitation in our own day, it may be useful to add a few more specimens. *The Lay Folk's Mass Book* says:

When time is near of saking—A little bell men use to ring—Then shalt thou do reverence—To JESU CHRIST's own presence—That may loose all baleful bands.—Kneeling hold up both thy hands—And so the levation thou behold,—For that is He that Judas sold—And since was scourged and done on Rood—And for mankind there shed His Blood . . .—Such prayer then thou make—As likes best thee to take.—Sundry men pray sere, (i.e., several)—Each man in his best manner.—Short prayer should be without dread—And therewith Pater noster and the Creed.—If thou of one be unpurveyed,—I set here one that may be said,—Though I mark it here in letter—Thou may change it for a better.

The prayer that he adds is in another metre, and was probably an older form in common use. It is as follows:

Loued ‡ be Thou, King,  
And blessed be Thou, King,  
Of all Thy giftes good;  
And thanked be Thou, King  
JESU, all my joying,  
That for me spilt Thy Blood  
And died upon the Rood:  
Thou give me grace to sing  
The song of Thy louing.  
Pater noster. Ave Maria. Credo.

A later form in another MS. is this:

Welcome, LORD, in form of bread,  
For me Thou tholedst a painful deed;  
As thou sufferedst the crown of thorn,  
Grant me grace, LORD, I be not lorn.

Some Latin prayers are provided in the MS. as substitutes. One consists of five series of honourable titles, somewhat like those of our modern Litany of the Name of JESUS, each series beginning, Ave JESU CHRISTE; the second is a more popular rhyme:

Ave Caro CHRISTI cara, Immolata Crucis arâ  
Pro redemptis Hostia,  
Morte tuâ nos amarâ Fac redemptos luce clarâ  
Tecum frui gloriâ.

The learned editor of the *Lay Folk's Mass Book* says: "In addition to these and very many others in books of devotion, there is a great variety put forth with authority in books of hours and primers and rubricated, 'At the levacion of our LORD,' 'In elevatione corporis CHRISTI,' and so forth."§

\* *Ancren Riwle*, p. 33 (Camden Society, 1853). Among the Carmelites the celebrant at the present day, just before communion, repeats the words: "Hail, Salvation of the world, Word of the Father," etc., as above (O'Brien, *History of Mass*, p. 367).

† *Instructions*, etc., l. 284 sq. (E. E. Text Soc.)]

‡ Loued, i.e. praised, from Anglo-Saxon *lofian*.

§ The *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, edited with notes and illustrations by Canon Simmons (p. 285). Early Eng. Text Soc. 1879.

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The Rev. Colin Grant of Eskdale informs me that in Inverness the Catholic peasants are accustomed to recite Gaelic verses in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, which are derived from no prayer-book, but have been handed down by tradition, perhaps from pre-reformation times. He has kindly furnished me with the following translation, and with the original Gaelic, which is here omitted. "Hail to Thee, O Body of CHRIST—Hail to Thee, O King of Hosts—Hail to Thee, O gracious Godhead—Hail to Thee, O true Manhood (man)—As Thou wert pleased, O CHRIST, to come—Under the cover of bread, Thy whole Body—Heal my soul from every evil—That is upon me now—Hail to Thee, Blood and Flesh—Hail to Thee, food of grace—Wash my sins in the Blood of Thy grace—Hail to Thee, both man and God—Guard me from him that goeth about—May I receive Thee at the hour of my death—O TRINITY without end, without beginning—Neither let Thy anger be upon me—Hail to Thee, true body, born of Mary Virgin—By Thy being pierced, shedding waves of Blood—Holy TRINITY, grant us thy Sacraments—To-day and at our death hour, and Amen."

Although two candles were ordered to be lighted throughout the Mass, one of which at least was to be of wax, yet two others were often lighted at the Parochial or High Mass during the canon or at least before the elevation. Henry Woodlock, Bishop of Winchester in 1308, "seeking in this to imitate the faith and devotion of his predecessors," grants an indulgence of ten days to all who help to maintain these two torches.\* Bishop Peter Quivil of Exeter, in 1287, ordered that these two torches should be provided from the alms of the parish, and gave an indulgence of fifteen days to all contributors.† Many donations for this purpose are to be found mentioned in parochial documents and wills.‡ The same rich mine of information about old customs shows that, in some few places, the little bell calling attention to the moment of consecration had been developed, under the influence of what I must think mistaken piety, into elaborate devices calculated to distract the pious and be food of merriment to children and to idlers. John Baret, who held a position of importance under the abbot of St Edmund's, dying in 1463, ordered by his will§ that the image of our Lady is to be set up against a pillar with five tapers burning before it, and with chimes to be set near it. About the winding up of these chimes he leaves minute directions. They are to strike *Requiem æternam* at certain times, and to be made to go "at the sacring of the Mass of JESUS, at the sacring of the St Mary Mass on the Sunday, and likewise at the sacring of the Mass which the St Mary priest is to say for him every week, also at the Aves and at Compline each Saturday, Sunday and holy day throughout the year."

Even this was outdone by the citizens of Lynne and of Hull. Thomas Gosiman, Alderman of Hull, leaves in 1502, £40 in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, in order to construct at the high altar some machinery by which angels should ascend to the roof of the chapel and descend again during the elevation of the Body and Blood of our LORD, as is done in Lynne in the cathedral church, and this to continue until the end of the Pater noster.||

\* Wilkins, II, 294.

† *Ib.* 132.

‡ [An admirable collection of mediæval wills of ecclesiastical interest in the County of Kent, which is described upon the title page as a "Series of extracts from 15th and 16th Century Wills, relating to Church Building and Topography," has been published by Mr. L. Duncan, F.S.A., and Mr. Arthur

Hussey (Lond. 1907) under the title of *Testamenta Cantiana*. The elaborate indexes enable all classes of bequests to be readily found. The data they supply confirm in numberless ways, without substantially adding to, the eucharistic information given in this and following chapters.]

§ *Wills of Bury St Edmunds* (Camd. Soc. vol. XLVIII).

|| *Testamenta Eborac.* p. 209.



# ON SAYING AND HEARING MASS

To turn back from these good citizens of the fifteenth century to a learned and pious bishop of the thirteenth—Alexander de Stavensby, Bishop of Coventry, in his Constitutions of 1237, writes as follows: “Nothing is holier than the Sacrament of the altar, so that had our LORD not left it to us, ‘We should have been as Sodom’ (Is. i, 9), that is to say, we should have been mute and not able to answer those who asked us ‘Where is your God?’ (Ps. xli, 4). But now we can answer that our GOD is here, and no other GOD shall be esteemed compared with Him (Baruch iii, 36), ‘Here on the earth He is daily seen’ (Baruch iii, 38), when by the hands of the priest He is daily elevated: and ‘He converses with men,’ from the lowly place in which He is hidden in a little pyx. And ‘we should have been as Gomorrha’ (Is. i, 9)\* that is rough and dry without spiritual devotion. Hence we order that at the elevation of the Eucharist, when it is last raised and higher,† then a small bell must be rung. This bell will be like a small trumpet announcing the coming of the Judge, or rather of our Saviour, secretly; so that our souls may exult when we draw near to the heavenly banquet, with a threefold joy, for where our LORD’s Flesh is, there is His Soul, and there is GOD the Word.”‡

## CHAPTER VI. ON SAYING AND HEARING MASS

IN the Council of Clovesho, held by Archbishop Cuthbert and the bishops of the province of Canterbury in 747, priests are admonished, besides their other duties, “to perform with the greatest diligence the ministry of the altar, and whatever belongs to divine worship; to keep carefully their church (*oratorii domum*) and everything pertaining to its adornment; and to devote themselves to reading, to prayer, to the celebration of Masses, and the singing of psalms.”§

Of all these duties we have to consider at present only the celebration of Mass. We know already how and where it was to be said; but there remain several questions which may be asked concerning it, as—At what hour of the day could it be said? How frequently? And in this respect, what was the law and what the custom? With what intentions was it offered by the celebrant? I shall attempt to answer these questions, intermingling, when possible, some examples of saintly devotion.

And first as regards the time. Nothing is more important in reading old documents than to make sure what is understood by divisions of time, whether as regards the year or the day. The hours of the day were not reckoned by our Saxon forefathers from midnight, but from sunrise.|| Between sunrise and sunset the day was divided into twelve equal parts or hours; the hours or intervals were of course much longer in summer than in winter. The latinized designations of the principal hours, still in use though in a somewhat modified sense, were as follows. Prime was the first hour, or the hour of sunrise, Sext, or the sixth hour, was midday. Halfway between prime and sext was tierce, or the third hour;¶ half-way between sext and sunset was none, or the ninth hour; supposing the sun to rise at six, tierce would be nine o’clock

\*According to some mediæval writers, Sodom meant dumbness or blindness, and Gomorrha meant dryness and sterility.

† “Quando ultimo elevatur et magis in altum.” The first small elevation was before the consecration, when the priest said: “Qui pridie.” [Here we have a

further confirmation of what was said in a previous note about the origin of the elevation.]

‡ Wilkins, i, 640. §Haddan and Stubbs, iii, 365.

|| See Lingard, *A.S.* i, 272, note.

¶ Sometimes called *undern*, not only in Anglo-Saxon times, but until the Reformation.

## THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

sext midday, none three in the afternoon; and it is most convenient for us, though not quite accurate, to associate in our minds the moveable periods of the Church in earlier times with our fixed hours, adding always six hours to their numbers. Thus prime may be considered as our six in the morning, sext as our noon, and none as three in the afternoon. It was at none on fast-days in Lent that it was lawful to break the fast.\* Now, wherever making holiday or breaking fast is concerned, there is a popular and almost irresistible tendency to anticipate the hour fixed; and thus the hour of none was continually being drawn back towards midday, until at last in common conversation none (noon) and midday became synonymous.

The whole Divine Office, or offering of prayer and praise to God, which the Church in every age pays to Him by the mouth of her ministers, is divided into parts, appointed to be said—at least when performed solemnly in choir—at fixed hours of the day and night; so that the designations prime, tierce, sext and none were given to the portions of the day office said at those hours. Here again the exact hour was not always observed, so that it occasionally happens that these words must be taken in an approximate sense.

The hours for Mass were regulated by the hours of the Divine Office which served as a preparation for it. In accordance with the words of the Psalmist, “Septies in die laudem dixi tibi,” it was divided into seven parts. Matins, or that portion to be said during the night, consisted of one long or three shorter nocturns. Strictly it began shortly after midnight, and in great monasteries and cathedrals the rigour of this law was upheld. In many churches it was put off till almost daybreak, and thence called uht-sang, or dawn-song. A secular professor of the University of Paris in the twelfth century, John Belethus, complains, as of a shameful degeneracy, that “care for the worship of God has now sunk so low, that boys rise [to play] sooner than the Church’s ministers rise [to pray], and sparrows sing earlier than priests. To such a degree has the love of God grown cold among men.”† What would the indignant professor say of our nineteenth century? But to continue—matins were followed in the early morning by lauds, or lof-song. This was often joined with the night-song. In a colloquy written in the tenth century to teach Latin to the boy-monks we find the following account of the monastic hours:

*Master.* Boy, what have you done to-day?

*Pupil.* I have done many things. Last night, when I heard the signal, I rose from my bed and went to the church and sang uht-san (*nocturnam*) with the brethren. Then we sang “of all saints” and morning lauds (*dægredlice lof-sanges*); afterwards prime and the seven psalms with litanies and the first Mass (*primam missam, capitol mæssan*), then tierce (*undertide*), and we performed the Mass of the day. Next we sang sext (*middæg*), and we ate and drank and slept and rose again, and sang none; and now here we are before you, ready to hear what you will tell us.‡

A Norman writer, who died in 1079, says: “Mass, according to ancient prescription, is said at the third hour (after sunrise), for at that hour CHRIST was crucified by the tongues of the Jews; but, according to common custom,

\* In a metrical version of the Parable of the Labourers, written about A.D. 1300, most of the usual divisions of time occur. “In *marewe* men he sohte, At *under* mo he brohte, At *mydday* ant at *non*, He sende them thider fol son. At *evesong* euen neh,” etc. (*Specimens of Early English*, by Morris and Skeat, part II, p. 46, ed. 1879.) *Marewe*, *morwe*, or *morrow*, is Morning. Hence *Morrow-mass* is the early Mass. Under, or *undern*, is

9 o’clock, or the period between nine and midday.

† *Rationale Div. Offic.*, cap 20; Migne, tom. ccii. [John Beleth, though he taught at Paris, seems to have been an Englishman, and he shows at times his familiarity with English customs.]

‡ Ælfric’s *Colloquy*, edited by Mr Wright in the volume of *Vocabularies* forming part of the Library of National Antiquities (1857), pp. 12–14.



# ON SAYING AND HEARING MASS

rather at the sixth hour (midday), for in that he suffered at the hands of the executioners; on fast days at the ninth hour (i.e., between midday and sunset), for then He gave up His soul. But they who, in case of necessity, celebrate before tierce or after none, not as a custom but occasionally, from their desire to offer the sacrifice, are not to be blamed; for we read that Pope Leo said Mass at early dawn.”\* In such matters as these there was little or no difference between one part of the Church and another. Another writer at the beginning of the ninth century says that Pope Telesphorus ordered that Mass should never be offered before tierce and the Gloria never said in the afternoon (*post meridem*) except on the vigils of Easter and Pentecost.†

In the solemn fast of Lent the Mass was much later. It could not be said till the eighth or ninth hour, which would then be about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. On Holy Thursday, however, it was said somewhat sooner, but on Holy Saturday considerably later.‡ At whatever hour the celebrant said Mass, he was obliged to be fasting. But, in monasteries at least, no one (except in case of necessity) ever broke his fast till after the Mass which followed tierce had been said, i.e., till nine or ten o'clock. On the fast days throughout the year Mass was said after sext, and then the meal could be taken. But in Lent Mass was said after none, and by strict rule the fast could not be broken until after the Vespers which followed Mass. Charlemagne caused Mass to be celebrated in his palace during Lent at two in the afternoon; Mass was followed by Vespers, and then only he proceeded to his meal, which was properly called supper, but was also breakfast.§ The laws of Theodulf of Orleans, translated by Ælfric in the tenth century, state that if anyone should be prevented by his occupations from being present at Mass in Lent, he must still remain fasting till after Vespers. But no one will be surprised when he finds from the complaints of some of these old writers that the people were impatient to break their fast, and took the signal for none as a signal to run to eat.

It is probable that what has been said regarded public rather than private Masses, though an expression of Venerable Bede (*a tertia hora, quando missæ fieri solebant*)|| seems to show that even these did not begin, under ordinary circumstances at least, in his time before tierce.

As regards frequency of celebration of the divine mysteries, this is treated of explicitly by Walafrid.¶ He considered it an open question. “Some priests say that Mass should be offered only once a day, others two or three times or as often as the priest may please. By the relation of trustworthy men it has come to my knowledge that Pope Leo,\*\* as he himself acknowledged, on one day would often celebrate seven or nine times, whereas St Boniface, archbishop and martyr, said Mass only once a day. These were both men in our own time, and both high in rank and in science. Therefore, let each one abound in his own

\* *Liber de Officiis Eccles.*, by John, brother of Richard, Duke of Normandy. He was afterwards Archbishop of Rouen. (Migne, tom. cXLVII, p. 37.)

† Walafridus, Migne, tom. cxiv, p. 951.

‡ *Liber Sacr. S. Gregorii*, Migne, tom. LXXVIII, p. 315. See notes of the Benedictine editors. John Belethus, in his *Rationale Div. Off.*, cap. 50 and 99, notices that Mass was said very late (*valde sero*) on the Ember Saturdays, because of the ordinations, and on the Saturdays before Easter and Whitsunday, and that it might in one sense be considered to belong to the Sunday; but as the celebrant was to be fasting the Mass could begin after vespers at nightfall. On Holy

Saturday vespers are sung in the Mass. Migne, tom. ccii, pp. 56 and 104. See also Giraldus Cambrensis, *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, p. 24 (Rolls Series).

§ See Hampson, *Medii Ævi Kalendarium*, i, 87, and Peter Comestor, apud Migne, tom. cxcviii, p. 1753. [This question of the “hours” and the names given to them in mediæval documents has been very fully investigated in various publications of Gustav Bihliger; for example, his work: *Die mittelalterlichen Horen und die modernen Stunden.*, 1892.]

|| Bede, ii, 22.

¶ *De reb. eccl.*, Migne, tom. cxiv, p. 943.

\*\* This was Leo III., who died in 816.

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sense." Walafrid, however, gives it as his own opinion that a priest may celebrate more than once a day when there is some good reason. This liberty seems to have lasted long, since even in 967 the thirty-seventh of St Dunstan's canons only restricts the number to three: "We command that no priest celebrate Mass more than thrice a day at most." A similar prohibition was made about the same time by St Oswald, Archbishop of York. It is of another matter we must understand an ancient canon ascribed to St Theodore: "It is allowed by the Greeks to offer two Masses on one altar, by the Romans five."\* Here the Masses are not supposed to be said by the same priest. A somewhat similar restriction is put upon the altar in a canon of St Boniface, which forbids a priest to say Mass on an altar on which a bishop has said Mass the same day.†

Gildas complained of certain British priests that they rarely celebrated (*raro sacrificantes*), and we shall hear similar complaints at a later period. But among the Anglo-Saxons the Councils appear to have been rather obliged to use restrictions, and if complaints are made by moral writers it is not of infrequent, but rather of too frequent as well as hasty, celebrations. On such a matter it is rash to affirm anything on the scanty information we possess, yet it would seem that devout priests among the Anglo-Saxons were certainly accustomed to offer holy Mass daily if possible, and that they looked on this privilege as so precious that they would not allow themselves to be debarred from it even by the fatigues of a long journey. Venerable Bede thus describes the last days of Abbot Ceolfrid: "He was seventy-four years old when he died; forty-seven years he had been in priest's orders, during forty-three he had been abbot. He never relaxed his first rigour from any occasion of old age, illness or travel. From the day he quitted his monastery (to go to Rome) till the day of his death, i.e., June 4, A.D. 716, till September 25, a space of 114 days, besides the canonical hours of prayer, he never omitted to go twice daily through the Psalter in order; and even when he became so weak that he could not ride on horseback and was obliged to be carried in a horselitter, every day he sang Mass and offered up the sacred Victim to God, except on one which he passed at sea, and the three days preceding his death."‡

Hitherto I have been speaking of the priest, the celebrant of Mass. I must now add a few details regarding the assistants.

The Protestant reformers proclaimed a deadly war against what they called private Masses, by which expression they meant a Mass in which the priest alone communicates. Denying, as they did, that the rite instituted by JESUS CHRIST is a sacrifice, they would not allow it to be celebrated except for the sake of the communicants, nor would they allow non-communicants to be present at it. They appealed to the practice of the early centuries of Christianity. Into this controversy I need not enter further than to say that even were it proved that every Christian who was present was a communicant, this would in no way imply that the action was not a sacrifice as well as a sacrament, nor would it derogate from the liberty of the priest to offer the sacrifice, even though no other communicant than himself could be found. The Council of Trent has expressed a wish that men so lived that they could all communicate whenever they assist at Mass. But in no age of the Church has a priest been forbidden to perform the divine rite in the absence of communicants, nor have non-communicants ever been forbidden to be present, unless they were unbaptized or excommunicated.§

\* Haddan and Stubbs, III, 117.

† Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 822.

‡ Bede, *Vitæ Beat. Abbatum*, ed. Giles, vol. IV, p. 400.

§ Cardinal Bona proves the antiquity of solitary or private Masses by abundant examples. (*Rerum Liturg.* l. i, cap. 13, 14.) See, on this matter, *supra* pp. 46-49.



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Confining ourselves to the period since the conversion of the Angles and Saxons, we find abundant facts to show that priests said Mass constantly at side altars, sometimes with only their server to assist, and sometimes in hermitages without even a server. Again, while it is certain that all Christians were bound to be present at Mass on Sundays and festivals at least, it is equally certain that all were not communicants. It is related in the life of St Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborn, who died in 709, that when a young monk at Malmesbury he showed great zeal in drawing the people to church. That part of England had not been long converted from paganism. His biographer tells us that the people, though acknowledging the faith, did not frequent the churches, nor did they care for the authority of the priests. To win them over gently, Aldhelm would on Sundays take his harp and, seated on a bridge outside the town, sing hymns that he had himself composed, for many traders used on that day to come into the town from a distance. When a number had been gathered around him attracted by the music, he would preach to them, and then lead them to the church to be present at the holy offices.\* Certainly very few of them can have been communicants.

What is here said of the reluctance of the people to frequent the churches must be understood only of this early stage of their Christianity. An Anglican clergyman, who was particularly versed in English antiquities, has truly said, in giving the early history of Leeds and alluding to the peasants in Saxon times: "Whatever might be their ignorance, all had devotion at least, and would resort to the parish church with an eagerness and regularity not always imitated by those who are more enlightened."†

Indeed, before or about the time when this incident is related of St Aldhelm in the south, Bede tells us how in the north, with which he was personally best acquainted, priests had so effectually evangelized the people in the villages that "on Sundays they flocked eagerly to the church."‡

The use of bells to call the people to church was introduced from the earliest times, and there was a special form appointed for their blessing. When assembled in church the men occupied the south side, the women the north.§ Dr Rock assures us that the latter, both old and young, all wore veils in church. Yet the only proof he brings is a quotation which Venerable Bede makes from St Paul about the duty of women "to be veiled because of the angels."|| That these words were understood more strictly by the Anglo-Saxons than by ourselves, and implied more than a covering for the head, is to me very doubtful, considering how often even Anglo-Saxon nuns are reprehended for their love of dress. If even these could not be induced by entreaties or admonitions to give up rich or gaudy dresses in the cloister, it is scarcely probable that the lay women of this nation concealed their faces or their finery beneath a veil, when there was an opportunity of attracting attention even before the altar.¶ Bede's words are no doubt intended as a gentle hint of what should have been. St Theodore also says that "women may receive the sacrifice under a black veil, according to St Basil"; but the saints advise many things which are never carried into practice.

As regards worship on the Sunday, it must be remembered, as I said before, that a day was counted from sunset to sunset, not from midnight to midnight, as with us. "A vespera usque ad vesperam dies Dominica servetur,"

\* *Vita*, Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 68.

† *Loidis and Elmete*, by Rev. T. D. Whitaker, p. 13 (ed. 1816).

‡ Bede, III, 26.

§ "In conventu ecclesiastico seorsum masculi et seorsum foeminae stant. Quod accepimus a veteri consuetudine: masculi stant in australi parte, et

foeminae in boreali." (Amalarius, *De Eccl. Off.* III, 2.)

|| 1 Cor. xi, 10.

¶ On this national love of dress which infected clergy, monks, and nuns, see Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon History*, vol. II, ch. 5, n. 6. "Flammea puella" was the name by which Archbishop Lullus designated a fashionable lady.

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said St Theodore; but at a later period what was called the freedom of the Sunday was extended. "Let men keep every Sunday's freedom\* from noontide on Saturday to the dawn of light on Monday," say the decrees of Edgar and of Canute.† The law which regulated the duties of laymen as regarded the worship of God on Sunday was as follows: "It is most right and proper that every Christian man, who has it in his power to do so, should come on Saturday to the church and bring a light with him, and there hear the vesper sung, and after midnight the uht-song, and come with his offering in the morning to the solemn Mass; and when he is there, let there be no dispute or quarrel, or discord, but let him with peaceful mind, during the holy office, intercede with his prayers and his alms, both for himself and all the people of God. And after the holy service let him return home and regale himself with his friends and neighbours and strangers, but at the same time be careful that they commit no excess in eating or drinking." And in another place: "We command all men, whatever may be their rank, to attend at the High Mass, with the exception only of the hallowed maidens whose custom it is not to go out of their minsters; these should continue within the enclosures of their minsters and there hear Mass." Many priests said private Masses, and this gave occasion to an abuse—viz., that many laymen, satisfied with having assisted at one of these low Masses, did not come to the High Mass, and so did not hear the sermon. To prevent this a law was made‡ "that no one should break his fast or taste any meat before the service of High Mass was ended; but that all, both males and females, should assemble at the High Mass and in the holy and ghostly church, and there hear the High Mass and the preaching of God's word"; and "we command those mass-priests who, both on Sundays and other mass days, wish to sing before the High Mass, that they do so privately, so that they draw off no portion of the people from the High Mass." Those who, through weakness of health or heedlessness of the above law, were not fasting, were not allowed to receive the pax or kiss of peace. The same prohibition extended to those who were doing penance and not yet allowed to receive communion. These, not being excommunicated in the proper sense of the word, could be present at Mass with the rest of the faithful, but not receive the pax.§ Infidels, catechumens and excommunicated persons could not be present during the solemn part of the Mass after the sermon.||

The Council of Clovesho in 747 bids the priests be very urgent with the people to come to the sermons and to the holy Mass.¶ Nothing is said in this canon about their being bound in the same sense to be present at the divine office. This seems to have been a matter of counsel. So also travellers were bound to assist at Mass, but not at other services. "Sunday," says the law,\*\* "is very solemnly to be revered; therefore we command that no man dare on that holy day to apply to any worldly work unless for the preparing of his food,

\*[*Freolsunga*. It is not quite certain that the idea of "solemnity" attaching to this word is not more primitive than that of freedom.]

†[See Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I, pp. 198, 294. There can be no question that the details of Sunday observance were greatly influenced by a certain apocryphal letter of Jesus Christ supposed to have fallen from heaven. It seems to have circulated all over Europe. See "A Mediæval Sunday" in the *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1899. The letter was translated even into Irish.]

‡ The above laws are thus translated by Thorpe (*Institutes*, II, 420, 440-442). Some of them were really

a translation into Saxon of the canons which Theodulf of Orleans had made in the eighth century. (See Wilkins, I, 265-282.) It is not certain that they had canonical force in England.

§ "Qui non communicat non accedat ad panem (*aliter* pacem) neque ad osculum in missa." (Theodore's *Penit.* I. II, 1; Haddan and Stubbs, III, 190.)

¶ The sons of Saba, who witnessed the communion, had probably refused to leave the church, or an exception was made for kings.

¶ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 367.

\*\* Thorpe, II, 420. [Liebermann, *Gesetze d. AS.* I, 294 (15), 383 (55), etc.]



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except it happen that he must of necessity journey. Then he may ride, or row, or journey by such convenience as may be suitable to his way, on the condition that he hear his Mass, and neglect not his prayers."

The holy sacrifice of the Mass was indeed, then as now, the great act of worship and religion. It was used to sanctify every solemn occasion of life. It was celebrated at the consecration of a church, and at the ordination of the clergy. It was offered to ask God's blessing upon the nuptial contract no less than on the profession of a monk or a nun, or the installation of an abbot or an abbess.\* It was with the rites of the holy Mass that the body was committed to the grave. It was part of the ceremonial of the coronation of a king, and it preceded the consultations of the Witan or Saxon parliament.† But perhaps nothing better proves the supreme importance attached to Mass than that provision should have been made for its celebration even in time of war. St Boniface sends to Archbishop Cuthbert a copy of the canons he had made in 742, which are known as the capitularies of Carloman.‡ One of them is as follows: "It is forbidden to the servants of God (monks or priests) to bear arms or to fight, or to accompany the army against an enemy, except to those who are selected purposely for the Divine Mystery, that is the celebration of Mass, and for carrying the relics of the saints: viz., the prince may have with him one or two bishops, with their chaplains§ and presbyters; and each prefect may have one priest to judge and give penance to the men who confess their sins." That similar regulations were carried out in England is evident from several incidental notices of historians. King Æthelred I, at the famous battle of Æscendun or Ashdown, in Berkshire, fought in 871 against the Danes, showed a devotion like that of Sobieski.

The story is thus related by Mr Freeman from *The Chronicle* and Asser's *Life of Alfred*. "The heathen men came on against them, but King Æthelred heard Mass in his tent, and men said: 'Come forth, O King, to the fight, for the heathen men press hard upon us.' And King Æthelred said: 'I will serve God first and man after, so I will not come forth till all the words of the Mass be ended.' So King Æthelred abode praying, and the heathen men fought against Alfred the Ætheling. And Alfred said: 'I cannot abide till the King my brother comes forth; I must either flee or fight alone with the heathen men.' So Alfred the Ætheling and his men fought against the five earls. Now the heathen men stood on the higher ground, and the Christians on the lower. Yet did Alfred go forth trusting in God, and he made his men hold close together with their shields, and they went forth like a wild boar against the hounds. And they fought against the heathen men and smote them, and slew the five earls. Then the Mass was over, and King Æthelred came forth and fought against the two kings, and slew Bagsecg the king with his own hand. So the English had the victory, and smote the heathen men with a great slaughter, and chased them even unto Reading."||

Perhaps nothing more contributed to the overthrow of all discipline and de-

\*Theodore's Penitential prescribes nuptial Mass and blessing at a first marriage. The Mass was said by a bishop at an ordination, by an abbot at the profession of a monk, by a priest at the consecration of an abbess, and by a bishop at that of an abbot. "Nuns and churches," he says, "are always consecrated with Mass."

†Kemble shows that "the witenagemot was opened by the celebration of Mass." (*Saxons in England*, I, 145.) In Egbert's Pontifical is the ceremonial of coronation.

‡*Opera S. Bonif.*, Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 807; Haddan and Stubbs, III, 384.

§The Latin word *capella* is derived from the word *capa*, a cope, because the kings of the Franks carried with them to battle the cope of St Martin as their most precious relic. The tent in which it was kept was the capella, and the priestly guardians the capellani. (Walafrid Strabo, *De Rebus Eccl.*, cap. XXXI.) Hence the modern words, "chapel" and "chaplain."

||*Old English History*, by E. A. Freeman, p. III [See Stevenson's *Asser*, pp. 29 and 239.]

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votion both amongst clergy and laity than the terrible devastations of the Danes, especially in the ninth and tenth centuries. An ancient author who lived when traditions of their last inroads were yet fresh, writes that, "when the Danes were masters in England, the Saxons in their poverty and sufferings were so depressed that the churches were no longer frequented, nor the day and night offices said by monks and nuns."\* To the same cause were probably due the terrible disorders among the clergy in the tenth century with which all Protestant historians have taken good care to make us familiar. Among these disorders we find, as we might naturally expect, that neglect of Mass went along with luxury and intemperance,† just as it had done among the British clergy during the invasions of the Saxons, according to the testimony of St Gildas.

And so, on the other hand, we find that the great reformers of those days, and holy prelates, such as St Odo, the two saints Elphege, St Oswald, St Ethelwold, St Dunstan, drew from the holy Mass the strength which enabled them to stem the torrent of iniquity, and found in it the means of reviving piety in others. The late Bishop Stubbs vindicated the memory of St Dunstan, and showed what was the character of his work. "The true mark of Dunstan's mind," he says, "must be looked for in Edgar's legislation, and in the few canons passed at the ecclesiastical assemblies of the reign. The laws that bear Edgar's name must bear the impress of Dunstan's mind." Then, after proving that these were really passed during St Dunstan's pontificate, and giving an abridgement of them, he adds: "If Dunstan's work is here, we have some justification of the praise of his biographers. The ecclesiastical laws of the period are of the same constructive and progressive stamp."‡

Whence then did St Dunstan draw his wisdom and his strength? According to the unanimous testimony of his biographers, two of whom were contemporaries, and one an eyewitness,§ one of the characteristics of his life was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I have given in a former chapter the history of his vision of the heavenly Mass, while in his pontifical robes he leant upon the altar in prayer, waiting for the king's return from hunting, and of the rebuke he then administered to the king for disturbing the Sunday's rest and delaying the divine worship by his eagerness for sport. A more startling history than this, though it contains no vision, is related by Osbern and Eadmer, the saint's later biographers. I say more startling, because at first sight it betokens a love of justice which may seem excessive and even rigorous. It is fair to say, before relating it, that it does not appear in either of the contemporary writers who have recorded St Dunstan's life. However, Osbern and Eadmer, though they flourished nearly a century after the event they relate, were well acquainted with the traditions handed down in the Church of Canterbury, and had also other sources of information besides the earlier lives which now exist. Osbern, in an apostrophe to St Dunstan on his elevation to the bishopric of London, says: "Give judgement against the false coiners, the defrauders of the people, and do not approach the holy altar on the day of Pentecost to offer sacrifice until ven-

\*Faricius, in *Vita S. Aldhelmi* (Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 77). Faricius is here writing of times long subsequent to St Aldhelm. But Bishop Lupus, or Wulfstan, in a sermon preached or written in 1013, draws a fearful picture of the vices and impiety of the English in those days of disorder. The sermon is to be found in Hickes, and in Langebek's *Rerum Danicarum Scriptores*, tom. II, 464.

†"Male morigerati clerici, elatione et insolentia ac luxuria præventi, adeo ut nonnulli eorum dedig-

narentur missas suo ordine celebrare, repudiantes uxores quas illicite duxerant, et alias accipientes, gulæ et ebrietati jugiter dediti." (*Hist. Aben.* II, 260.)

‡Introd. to *Memorials of St Dunstan* (Rolls Series, 1874), p. 105. [Some important corrections to Stubbs' chronology have been made in Gasquet and Bishop's *Bosworth Psalter*, 1908, pp. 134 ff.]

§Stubbs published for the first time a life of St Dunstan, by Adelard, written a few years later than the anonymous one printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*.



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geance has fallen on them and justice has been done to the people of God.”\* The very obscurity of these words shows that Osbern was alluding to some well-known story. Eadmer tells us what it was; and though in so doing he evidently embellished a little, and puts words into Dunstan’s mouth which are not, strictly speaking, historical, yet his narrative contains not only the well-known fact, but also the traditional estimate of the saint’s character. “At another time,” he says, “three coiners had been captured with their false money and condemned to the penalty which had been proclaimed throughout the kingdom” (this was to lose the hand). “The matter was known to St Dunstan, and on Whit-Sunday, being about to offer Mass, he inquired whether justice to God’s people had been executed on these malefactors or not. He was told that, out of reverence for so great a feast, the execution of the penalty was put off to another day. ‘By no means,’ he replied; ‘these coiners are thieves, and thieves of the worst kind. By false money they rob and disturb the whole land. They injure all classes, rich and poor alike, bringing them to shame, to poverty, or to utter ruin. Know then that I will not offer sacrifice to God until the sentence has been carried out. As the matter concerns me, if I neglect to appease God by the punishment of so great an evil, how can I hope that He will receive sacrifice from my hands? This may be thought cruel, but my intention is known to God. The tears, sighs and groans of widows and orphans, and the complaints of the whole people, press on me and demand the correction of this evil. If I do not seek as far as in me lies to soothe their affliction, I both offend God who has compassion on their groans, and I embolden others to repeat the crime.’ Thus he spoke, yet, out of pity for the pain of those who were to lose their hands, he began to shed tears, so that it was easy to see from what source the decree which seemed cruel really proceeded. When he heard that justice had been executed, he rose and washed his face, and went to the church with a more cheerful countenance, saying, ‘Since I have listened to God to-day by obeying the laws of justice, I trust that He in His mercy will receive sacrifice from my hands.’” Eadmer goes on to say that he was not disappointed, since a white dove was seen to hover over him during the Mass, which at its conclusion seemed to disappear in the tomb of St Odo.†

It would be a great mistake to gather from this history that sternness was the characteristic of St Dunstan, as it would be to form such a judgement about our Divine Redeemer, because He pronounced woe to the scandalous, or looked round with anger on the obstinate, or drove the money-changers from the



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first Mass at Canterbury. Adelard, the contemporary writer, alludes to the vision, but without specifying time or place. (*Ib.*, p. 62.)

\**Memorials*, p. 106.

†*Memorials of St Dunstan*, p. 202. Osbern also relates the vision of the dove, but attributes it to his

first Mass at Canterbury. Adelard, the contemporary writer, alludes to the vision, but without specifying time or place. (*Ib.*, p. 62.)

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Temple. The great archbishop's tender pity and love for the people, and the love which the people entertained for him, are proved by abundant testimony. Professor Stubbs, who has nobly rebuked some of our leading historians for their utterly baseless accusations against St Dunstan, thus writes: "He was only sixty-four when he died, but his public life had begun early and lasted long, and his fame lived, both at home and abroad, in the praises of the strangers whom he had befriended, the churches that he had planted, the scholars whom he had taught, but chiefly in the longing remembrance of the peace and glory which Edgar under his teaching had maintained. Yet Dunstan's memory was worshipped not only from a feeling of regret; his beatification in popular regard scarcely waited for his death."\*

To the saint's tender piety we have the following testimony of an eyewitness: "When he was minded to pay to CHRIST the LORD the due homage of service and the celebration of Mass, he laboured with such entire devotion in singing that he seemed to be speaking face to face with the LORD, even if just before he had been vexed with the quarrels of the people. Like St Martin he constantly kept eye and hand intent on heaven, never letting his spirit rest from prayer. And whenever he performed any act of religion, as in the sacred ordinations of priests, or in the consecration of churches or altars, he shed such abundant tears as showed that his soul was the habitual dwelling-place of the HOLY GHOST."†

I conclude this chapter by the beautiful account left by his contemporary, Adelard, of the Saint's last Mass and his death.‡

"On Ascension Day, 988," he says, "Dunstan preached as he had never preached before; and as his Master, when about to suffer, had spoken of peace and charity to His disciples, and had given His Flesh and Blood for their spiritual food, so too did Dunstan commend to GOD the Church which had been committed to him, raising it to heaven by his words and absolving it from sin by his apostolic authority. And offering the sacrifice of the Lamb of GOD, he reconciled it to GOD. But before the Holy Communion, having given as usual the blessing to the people, he was touched by the HOLY GHOST, and pronounced the form of benediction with unusual grace.§ Then, having commended peace and charity to all, while they looked on him as on an angel of GOD, he exclaimed: 'Farewell for ever.'

"The people were still listening eagerly to his voice and gazing lovingly on his face, when he returned to the holy altar to feed on his Life; and so, having refreshed himself with the Bread of Life, he completed this day with spiritual joy.

"But in that very day the column of GOD began to totter, and as his sickness increased he retired to his bed, in which the whole of the Friday and the Friday night, intent on celestial things, he strengthened all who came to visit him. On the morning of the Sabbath [i.e., the Saturday], when the matin song was now finished, he bids the holy congregation of the brethren come to him. To whom again commending his soul, he received from the heavenly table the viaticum of the sacraments of CHRIST, which had been celebrated in his presence, and, giving thanks to GOD for it, he began to sing: 'The merciful and gracious LORD hath made a memorial of His wonders, He hath given meat to them that fear Him.' And with these words in his mouth, rendering his spirit into his Maker's hands, he rested in peace. Oh! too happy whom the LORD has found watching!"

\**Memorials*, p. civ. [His true age was probably seventy-nine. See *Bosworth Psalter*, p. 143.]

†*Memorials*, p. 50, from the life by B.

‡*Ib.*, p. 65.

§It has been said in the account of the Anglo-Saxon Liturgies, that in pontifical Masses a solemn blessing was given before communion.



# THE VALUE OF THE MASS

## CHAPTER VII. THE VALUE OF THE MASS AND THE INTENTIONS OF THE CELEBRANT

ONE reason of the great importance attached to the daily celebration of Mass was that it was thoroughly understood that the unbloody commemoration of our LORD's Passion, like our LORD's Passion itself, of which it is the perpetual application, not only profits the celebrant, the communicants and the assistants, but also profits the absent, whether living or dead. The language as well as the practice of our forefathers in this respect is too plain to be misunderstood.

"The bishop and the priest," says, in the tenth century, the author of *The Blickling Homilies*, "if they will rightly serve GOD, must minister daily to GOD's people, or at least once a week sing Mass for all Christian people and for all who have been born from the beginning of the world. And it is GOD's will that they should intercede for them. Then shall they receive from GOD greater reward than they may do by any other gifts, for very dear to GOD are His people. And those that are in heaven shall intercede for those who are engaged in this song. And they shall be in the prayer of all earthly folk who have been Christians or yet may be; and they shall never die in their sins, and GOD's mercy and that of all saints shall be upon them."\*

In accordance with this doctrine the priest in his very ordination was authorized by the Anglo-Saxon Pontifical "to offer up oblations for the living and for the dead; and that, for his own weal and the weal of all the people, he was to transform, by an unspotted blessing, the Body and the Blood of the Son of GOD."†

Part of the liturgy of the Mass is invariable, and is therefore called the canon or rule. Other parts vary according to the Sunday, ferial day, or festival. Masses have also been composed for special occasions, and are called votive Masses, because said according to the *votum*, i.e., the intention or desire of the celebrant, who in this may either satisfy his own needs or devotion or those of others for whom he offers sacrifice. In Leofric's Missal there are Masses appointed "for the living and dead," "for friends and relatives," "to ask for the suffrages of the angels," "in honour of the Holy Cross," "in honour of the saints whose relics are in the church," and the like. Alcuin likewise drew up several Masses for special intentions, as in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, for wisdom, for the gift of compunction and perfect charity, for the intercession of saints and angels, and for that of the Blessed Mother of GOD.‡

Bede tells us how, in memory of a special mercy, Mass was to be said "either in thanksgiving or else in memory of St Oswald," to whose intercession the grace was attributed.§ In this case, as no proper Mass of St Oswald had then been composed, it seemed that the interior intention was alone changed, and not the liturgy.

When Bishop Ethelheard deserted his church in time of danger, Alcuin wrote to admonish him of his fault, and advised him in expiation to appoint a fast day, to give alms, and to have Masses said to appease GOD's anger.||

In a time of general calamity no means more efficacious was known to bring

\* *Blickling Homilies*, p. 44 (Early English Text Society).

† *Pontif. Anglo-Saxonicum*, apud Rock, I, 27.

‡ Alcuini *Opera*, I, 59, 256, II, 13; Rock, I, 73, III, 187.

§ See Chapter VI, p. 96, *antea*.

|| A.D. 798; Haddan and Stubbs, III, 519.

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God's blessing on the remedies employed than to offer the Son of God to His heavenly Father, who had sent Him down to earth out of compassion for men's miseries. About the year 1012 some ecclesiastical laws were made at Haba under King Ethelred II. The times were indeed calamitous. In vain had the weak and "unready" king bought off the Danes. They came in still greater numbers, marking their course by pillage, massacre and conflagration. Canterbury had been taken, the cathedral violated, all the monks but four slain, men, women and helpless infants butchered. St Elphege, the archbishop, seeking to intercede for his people, had fallen into the hands of the pagans, and, after seven months of prison and torture, had been brutally massacred at Greenwich.\* Under these terrible afflictions the whole nation was called to prayer, but especially the priests and monks. The third chapter of the laws enacted at Haba was as follows: "We command that in every community a Mass shall be sung daily and publicly for the king and all his people. It will take the place of the conventual Mass, and shall be the votive Mass 'against the pagans.' At each of the canonical hours the whole community, prostrate on the earth, shall recite the psalm 'Domine, quid multiplicati sunt' (Ps. iii) and the collect against the heathen. And this shall be done as long as the present necessity lasts. And in every monastery or community of monks each priest shall say thirty Masses for the king and people, and every monk thirty psalters."† Nor were these prayers in vain, though they were heard not altogether according to the intention of the suppliants. The Danes triumphed indeed, and became masters of the land, but not as formerly the Angles and Saxons had triumphed over the British. The triumphant Danes yielded to the Christian faith. Canute, who had till then acted as a barbarian, on becoming sole monarch of England and Denmark, Norway and part of Sweden in 1017, led a life in conformity with his baptism, and sought to atone for his usurpation by a just and wise government. He rebuilt magnificently St Edmund's Bury in order to make reparation for the outrages of his father Sweyne, and he not only consolidated the faith among his Danish and Saxon subjects in England, but also spread it throughout Denmark. It is almost impossible not to see in this conversion of the Danes a reward for the piety, sufferings, and zeal of the Anglo-Saxons, whose conduct presents a great contrast with that of the British Christians towards their ancestors. The Britons, even at the earnest request of St Augustine, had refused in any way to help in the conversion of their hated enemies, and even long after their conversion would scarce regard them as Christians. Far different was the conduct of St Elphege. During the siege of Canterbury he devoted himself to his countrymen and spiritual children by exhortations, by preparing them for Holy Communion, and strengthening them for martyrdom.‡ But when he was in the hands of his cruel enemies his zeal was no less ardent for their conversion. Though he could have raised the large sum asked for his ransom, he refused to take a measure that would impoverish his priests and the poor, and he replied to the Danes that he had no other gold for them than the knowledge of the true God. When they were afflicted with an epidemic, he prayed for them and blessed bread for their recovery, and was successful in baptizing and confirming some of them before his martyrdom. This charity, with the prayers and Masses said at the command of his fellow-bishops, met this striking reward, that when in 1023, eleven years after his death, his uncorrupted body was solemnly translated from London to Canterbury, Canute, the

\* A most graphic description of the death of St Elphege is given by Lingard, *A.S.*, II, 293-296.

† Spelman, I, 531; Wilkins, I, 295.

‡ "Episcopali super illos benedictione effusa, pacis

communione in osculo sancto libata, dum divini epuli omnes participes efficeret, se illis, illos sibi, utrosque autem omnium Protectori Deo commendavit." (Osbern.)



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Danish king, with his own hand held the tiller of the ship that carried the precious burden while it passed across the Thames.\*

It was not only in times of calamity that Mass was offered for the king. This was an obligation often imposed at the foundation or endowment of a monastery. Thus, in a charter written before the high altar of St Peter in the city of Winchester, in 855, King Ethelwulf requires, in return for his benefactions, that all the brethren and sisters of Winchester, and Shireburn every week, on Wednesday, in each of their churches shall sing fifty psalms, and each priest shall say two Masses, one for the king and another for his generals or nobles (*ducibus*), for their good estate and pardon of their sins. After their death one of the Masses was still to be offered for the king, the other for his nobles.† In 821 King Kenulf granted a charter to Abingdon. Every Sunday the community was to offer seven Masses for the king and other prayers. Ethelred II, in a charter to the same monastery, mentions that the monks had already offered for him 1,500 Masses and 1,200 psalteries.‡ These things are sneered at by certain Protestant writers, as if the kings were evidently the dupes of designing monks. But assuredly, were there deception in trusting to the efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice, the monks and clergy were its victims as much as kings and nobles. In private correspondence, never meant for the public eye, much less to come down to us, they show as great a faith in the divine commemoration as they could have wished to find among benefactors.

Thus Sigebald, a monk, writes to St Boniface to ask him to be his bishop, together with his diocesan Bishop Daniel, and declares that he mentions the name of Boniface in his Mass together with that of Daniel; and promises that if he survives Boniface he will mention his name together with that of his deceased bishop Esenwald.§ Eadburga, an English nun, writes in 719 to the same saint, then in Germany: "I beg you to offer the oblations of holy Masses for the soul of my relative, and by the same bearer I send you fifty shillings and an altar-cloth."|| Again, Ebwald, an abbot, makes an interchange of prayer and Masses with St Boniface. The bishop is to be remembered by name in the Masses of Ebwald's monastery and at the seven hours of prayer. The abbot will also send to St Boniface, when opportunity serves, the list of his monks who shall die, that they may be remembered by him.¶ The King of Kent and the Bishop of Rochester write a letter to Lullus, the successor of St Boniface in the see of Mentz, and thus express themselves:\*\* "It is our earnest wish to recommend ourselves and our dearest relatives to your piety, that by your prayers we may be protected till we come to that life which knows no end. For what have we to do on earth but faithfully to exercise charity towards each other? Let us then agree that when any among us enters the path which leads to another life (may it be a life of happiness!) the survivors shall, by their alms and sacrifices, endeavour to assist him in his journey." They then send some names of deceased relatives.

Among all the Anglo-Saxon clergy none was more enlightened, none more sincere and earnest, than Venerable Bede. In dedicating his life of St Cuthbert to the monks of Lindisfarne he begs that "when he is dead they will pray and offer Masses for the release (*redemptione*) of his soul, and place

\* See Alban Butler, April 19th; and Osbern in *Anglia Sacra*, II, 122.

† Haddan and Stubbs, III, 641; Kemble, *Cod. Dip.*, t. V, p. 94.

‡ *Historia de Abingdon*, I, 27 and 362. Mr Kemble thinks the charter of Ethelred a forgery, but without

sufficient reason according to Father Stevenson. See other examples in Dr Rock, II, 326.

§ *Inter Op. S. Bonif.*, Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 723.

|| *Ib.*, p. 692.

¶ *Inter Op. S. Bonif.*, Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 725.

\*\* Ep. 77, *inter Op. S. Bonif.* (Lingard's translation).

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his name among those of their brethren." He has also in his history related a marvellous event which well illustrates the faith of that age. "A young soldier named Imma had been made prisoner and put in irons. He had a brother named Tunna, who was a priest and abbot, and who, having heard that Imma had been killed in battle, went to seek for his body, and finding one very like it brought it to his monastery and buried it, and for the release of the soul took care to say many Masses. Now it happened that however fast Imma was chained, his chains were always found to have fallen off. And when the earl, whose prisoner he was, wondering at this, asked him if he had about him any charm, he replied that he knew nothing about charms, but that he had a brother a priest in his province, and 'I know,' he said, 'that he thinks me dead and says Masses for me, and now, were I in the next world, my soul through his intercession would be freed from its pains.' Now it was at the hour of tierce, when Masses are wont to be said, that his chains were loosed. When he gained his liberty and returned to his brother, he found that he had conjectured rightly. And many, hearing from him what had happened, were strengthened in faith and in devotion, to pray and give alms and to offer to the LORD victims of the sacred oblation. For they understood that the saving sacrifice has virtue for the everlasting redemption of soul and body."\*

The faith of the Catholic Church is well summed up by Florus in his treatise on the Mass written about 850. He is commenting on the words *Memento etiam Domine*, etc. "Remember, O LORD, Thy servants and Thy handmaids, who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace. To these and to all who rest in CHRIST mercifully grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, of light and of peace."

"Our pious mother the Church," he says, "prays also for her dead, and commends them to GOD through the intercession of the sacred oblation, believing most certainly that that precious Blood, 'which was shed for many for the remission of sins,' is available not only for the welfare of the living, but also for the absolution of the dead, as St John declares: 'The Blood of His Son JESUS CHRIST cleanses us from every sin.' Leaving their bodies, the faithful go before us to the LORD; but they are not cut off from the Church, because they go before with the sign of faith and sleep the sleep of peace. *With the sign of faith*, because they have been regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost, and are signed with the Cross and Passion of CHRIST. *They sleep*, because they will truly be aroused from sleep in the resurrection, as our LORD said of the girl whom He was about to raise: 'The girl is not dead, but sleeps'; and again: 'Lazarus our friend sleeps, and I go to awake him from his sleep.' Hence St Paul says of the faithful dead: 'We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who sleep, that you be not sad like those who have no hope.' They sleep then *the sleep of peace*, since they were never separated from the unity and society of the Church either by heresies, or by schisms, or by moral crimes; or if they were ever involved in these, yet they were restored again and associated to the mystery of Redemption by penance and by the prayer of the Church, to which, in the person of Peter, it was said: 'Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'; and so at least they died in peace through the mercy of Him who desires not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live. Nor are the souls of the pious dead separated from the Church; otherwise the memory of them would not be made at the altar in the communication of the

\* *Hist.*, IV, 22.



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Body of CHRIST. Nor would it avail anything to run in time of danger to the Church's baptism, lest life should terminate without it, nor to have recourse to her absolution in case one had been separated from the Body of CHRIST by impenitence or evil conscience. Why are these things done, except that the faithful, even when dead, remain her members?

"Therefore the souls of the dead already reign with CHRIST, although not yet united to their bodies. Hence in the Apocalypse we read: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the LORD; for even now, saith the Spirit, they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them.' The Church, then, even now reigns with CHRIST, in her living and her dead; for CHRIST therefore died, says the Apostle, that He might be LORD both of the living and the dead. It is as clear as the light, St Gregory says, that the souls of the just who are perfect, as soon as they leave the prison of the flesh are received into the heavenly mansions. Therefore St Paul desired to be dissolved and to be with CHRIST. He then who does not doubt that CHRIST is in Heaven will not deny that the soul of St Paul is also in heaven. . . . And so, we must believe, is it with the souls of apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all those of the more perfect life. Yet there are some souls of just men that are detained in certain receptacles away from the kingdom of heaven, though they are in blissful repose. And by this loss of delay it is shown that they had not attained unto perfect justice.

"But there are some preordained, indeed, to the lot of the elect for their good works, but, on account of some bad works with the defilement of which they quitted their bodies, after death endure a severe chastisement, and are committed to the flames of purgatorial fire. These are either, by a long examination even until the day of judgement, cleansed from the defilement of vices; or else, being absolved from their pains sooner by the prayers, alms, fasts, tears and oblations of the saving Victim on the part of their faithful friends, they also arrive at the rest of the blessed.

"Therefore the holy sacrifice is profitable to those dead, who during their life merited to receive help after death from such good works as are here done for them by others. But we should reflect that the safer way is for each one to do for himself while alive the good that he hopes may be done for him by others. It is more blessed to go forth free than to seek for freedom after enduring chains.

"After the words 'who sleep the sleep of peace,' it was the ancient custom, as it is still that of the Roman Church, to recite from the diptychs or tables the names of the dead, and then at the end of the list the words were added: 'To these and to all who rest in CHRIST, grant we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace.' The place of *refreshment* is that in which is not felt that burning pain of which the rich man buried in hell complained: 'I am tormented in this flame.' The place of *light* is that which our LORD promises to His faithful, saying: 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life'; and of which the Psalmist says: 'That I may please God in the light of the living!' The place of *peace* is that to which Simeon aspired: 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace'; and of which the Scripture says that the saints seem to fools to die, but they are in peace.

"This, then, is the pious and religious observance which the Church has without doubt received from Apostolic tradition, and which she keeps uniformly and solemnly throughout the world; and this custom is also commended by the Old Testament Scriptures and the careful observance of the ancient Fathers. For we read in the Books of the Machabees," etc.\*

\* Florus Diaconus, *De actione Missarum* (Bib. Max. Lugd., tom. xv, p. 79).

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Let us examine more minutely what rules were made concerning Mass for the dead. Archbishop Theodore mentions that, in a Mass said especially for the dead, the "Alleluia" and "Gloria" were omitted. Though a Greek or Asiatic by birth—he was from Tarsus, the city of St Paul—yet he had lived long in Rome, and had been sent to England by Pope Vitalian to instruct the English in the customs of the Church. In reply to many questions about the care of the dead he gave the following answers:

"According to the Roman Church it is the custom to carry the bodies of the deceased monks or religious men to the church, to anoint their breasts with chrism, to say Mass for them there, then with chanting to carry them out to burial. When they are laid in the tomb, prayers are offered, and they are covered with the earth or with a stone. On the first, third, ninth and thirtieth day, Mass is said for them, and an annual commemoration may also be made for them. For a deceased monk Mass is offered on the day of his burial, and on the third day after that as many as the abbot appoints. It is the custom also to offer Masses for deceased monks and to recite their names every week.

"Masses are said for deceased laymen three times in the year, on the third day, the ninth and the thirtieth. For a good layman Mass is offered. For a penitent" (i.e., one who had been put to public penance and died before his full term) "on the thirtieth day, or on the seventh, after a fast; for his relatives ought to fast seven days and make an oblation at the altar, as the children of Israel fasted for Saul. After that the priest may offer as many as he pleases.

"Many say that it is not lawful to offer Mass for infants not seven years old. But it is.

"Dionysius the Areopagite says it is blasphemy to offer Mass for a wicked man; but Augustine says it may be offered for all Christians, for, 'if it does not benefit the deceased, it benefits those that offer and those that ask for it.' 'But if a bishop or abbot,' he says in another place, 'command a monk to sing Mass for a dead heretic, he must not obey.'"\* A similar rule was observed with regard to those who died excommunicate and impenitent, or for suicides, nor were they buried in consecrated ground.

At subsequent periods special regulations were made as to the suffrages to be offered for certain classes of persons. According to the *Regularis Concordia* or monastic regulations of St Dunstan,† besides the more solemn Mass said at the high altar for thirty days for a deceased monk, each monk in private said thirty Masses for his soul.

The Council of Celchyth in 816 decreed that when a bishop died a tenth part of his goods should be given to the poor, and all his English slaves be liberated. His memory was to be kept in all the churches. In each diocese in every church the bell was to be rung to call the people to church to recite thirty psalms for his soul. Thus every bishop and abbot should have celebrated six hundred psalms and one hundred and twenty Masses, and free three men and to give to each of them three shillings, besides other fasts and alms. Bede tells us (*Hist.* ii, 3) that in his time a priest said Mass every Saturday, solemnly, at the altar of St Gregory, in the church of SS. Peter and Paul in Canterbury, for the repose of the souls of the Archbishops there buried.

On the principle laid down by the Apostle that "he who serves the altar should live by the altar," it was customary to make offerings to the clergy when asking the special application of their intention in the offering of Mass. This

\* Haddan and Stubbs, III, 194, 181.

† [The *Regularis Concordia* is rather the work of St

Æthelwold, although it embodies, no doubt, practices approved, if not inaugurated, by St Dunstan.]



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had been already partly exemplified in what has been said about the foundations of religious houses and cathedrals. I add a few examples of other gifts and legacies. In 796 Charlemagne wrote to Offa, the English king. The letter is interesting as a kind of international treaty of commerce. For first the French monarch promises to let English pilgrims pass to Rome free of tax, though merchants must pay custom; next he promises to send some black marble which Offa had asked for; then he complains that the English cloaks which had been sent to France were too long; and lastly he sends presents for all the English bishoprics as alms for the soul of Pope Adrian, who had died in the preceding December, adding "that he had indeed no doubt but that that blessed soul was already in the enjoyment of rest, but that nevertheless he wished to show his fidelity and love to one who had been his most dear friend."\*

The will of King Alfred has fortunately been preserved. † In it he says: "Also let them distribute for me and for my father, and for the friends that he interceded for, and that I intercede for, two hundred pounds—fifty to mass-priests throughout all my kingdom, fifty to poor servants of God, fifty to distressed poor, fifty to the church where I shall rest—and I will that my aldermen and thanes meet together and distribute it." A very curious will of a bishop of the tenth century has also come down to us. Theodred, Bishop of the East Angles, was promoted to the see of London in the time of Edgar or of his son Edmund. He made the following will in Saxon, which I give in Mr Gale's translation: ‡ "In the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST I, Theodred, Bishop of London, will declare my testament of my inheritance that I have obtained, and yet may obtain, by the will of God and His hallows (i.e., saints), for my soul, and for my lord under whom I obtained it, and for my ancestors' and for all men's souls that I pray for, and of whom I have received alms, and for whom I ought justly to pray. That is, first, that he (Theodred) gives his lord his heriot, that is two hundred marks of red gold, and two silver cups and four horses, the best I have, and two swords and four shields and four spears, and the land that I have at Ankeswithe, etc. And to St Paul's Church my two best mass vestments that I have, with all the things that thereto belong, with a chalice and a cup, and my best mass-book, and all my relics, the best that I have, to St Paul's Church. And I give the land at Tit to St Paul's Church, towards the bed-land of the convent, with all that therein stands, except the men that are there, who are all to be set free for my soul. And I give the land at Suthereye (i.e., Surrey), with all the fishing that thereto belongs, to the convent of St Paul's Church, and set free the men for the bishop's soul" (i.e., his own). And after many other bequests: "And I give to every bishop's see five pounds to dole out for my soul. And I give to the archbishop five marks of gold. And I grant that ten pounds be doled for my soul at my bishopric within London and without London. . . . And I give to Theodred my white mass vestment that I bought at Pavie, and all that thereto belongs, and a feast-chalice, and two mass-books that Gosebricht bequeathed me. And I give Odgar the rich mass vestment that I bought at Pavie and what thereto belongs. And I give Gundwine the other rich mass vestment, that is unornamented, and what thereto belongs. And I give Spratocke the red mass vestment and all that thereto belongs. And whosoever takes from my testament may God take him from the kingdom of heaven, unless he amend it before his death!"

As we have very few Saxon wills, one more specimen may be interesting.

\* The letter is given by Haddan and Stubbs, III, 496.

† See Earle, *Land Charters*, p. 144.

‡ Gage's *History of Suffolk*, "The Hundred of Thingoe," p. 273. It is also published in *Codex*

*Diplom.* No. 957. [Its genuineness is recognized by W. H. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of Alfred*, p. 232. The change from the first to the third person is not the fault of the translator but occurs in the original.]

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It is that of an "anker" or hermit, who seems to have been a nobleman and to have retained the disposition of his property. Wills were often in old time addressed to the king as to their guardian. "Mantat, the anker, God's wretch, greeteth Knut the king and Emma the lady most blithely with God's bliss. And I make known to you that our alms I have bestowed on CHRIST and all His hallows, for the comfort and bliss of our soul, where it longest shall endure; that is, first the land of Twiwel to Thorney, where our bones shall rest, and the land at Cunnington to priests and deacons who earned it of me in my lifetime. And they have promised to God, and confirmed to me in hand, that they should each year do for us two hundred Masses and two hundred psalters, and thereto eke many holy prayers. Now pray I you, for God's love and for our wretched request, that no man pervert this, and that shall be made known of you in the life to come. The King of heaven's angels protect you here in life, and lead you in His light with Him, where without sorrow ye may ever dwell! Amen."\*

From some of the preceding documents it appears that there were two principal commemorations on which the holy Mass was offered for the deceased, viz., the month after the death or burial, and the anniversary. The former was called (as it is still) the month's-mind, the latter the year's-mind, and in later times more frequently the Obit. Almost our very earliest Anglo-Saxon writer, Eddius, in his life of St Wilfrid, tells us how Tatbert, to whom Wilfrid entrusted the government of his monastery at Ripon, ordered a Mass to be celebrated and alms to be distributed daily for his soul. On Wilfrid's anniversary during Tatbert's lifetime a tenth part of all the flocks and herds belonging to the monastery was distributed among the poor in addition to the daily alms. Annually also the abbots of all the monasteries founded by Wilfrid came together at Ripon, and, after spending the preceding night in watching and prayer, on the anniversary day assisted at a solemn Mass offered for him.†

It is evident that special anniversaries could not be kept for every monk, or even abbot or benefactor, for as years went on the number became very great. But anniversaries were kept for benefactors in general, and a memento was constantly made for them. For this purpose a register was kept, called the Album, or the Annal, or the Book of Life. A writer who had lived at Durham before the suppression of the monastery writes: "There did lie on the high altar an excellent fine book, very richly covered with gold and silver, containing the names of all the benefactors towards St Cuthbert's church from the first original foundation thereof, the very letters of the book being, for the most part, all gilt, as is apparent in the said book to this day. The laying that book on the high altar did show how highly they esteemed their founders and benefactors, and the quotidian remembrance they had of them in the time of Mass and divine service, and this did argue not only their gratitude, but also a most divine and charitable affection to the souls of their benefactors, as well dead as living."‡ By having their names inscribed in such books laymen became brethren of the religious houses, and participants in their good works and suffrages. Venerable Bede, not content with his special brotherhood with his own community at Jarrow, got himself inscribed in the brotherhood of Lindisfarne; and such an interchange of charity became very common, so that at the death of a monk a

\* From the Red Book or Cartulary of Thorney Abbey in Cambridgeshire, quoted in *Collectanea Topographica*, vol. iv, p. 58.

† Eddius, cap. 64 et 67, in *Historians of York* (Rolls Series, 1879).

‡ The *Liber Vitæ*, which lay for six centuries on the high altar, first at Lindisfarne, then at Chester-le-

Street, and last at Durham, is still in existence. It has been published by the Surtees Society. [The *Liber Vitæ* is in the Cottonian collection in the British Museum (Domitian, vii, 2) though it has been robbed of its original binding. See the *Rites of Durham*, 2nd ed., edited by Canon Fowler, Surtees Society, 1903, from which the above extract is made, pp. 17 and 208.]



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messenger was sent to have his name inscribed on the mortuary rolls of those religious orders with which there was such a compact.\*

I give two specimens of entries from the *Liber Vitæ*, of Durham, one of lay benefactors, the other of religious communities.

"This is the agreement which the convent of St Cuthbert promises to observe for ever towards Malcolm, King of the Scots, and Queen Margaret, and their sons and daughters, namely, for the king and queen while they live they will daily maintain one poor man, and two poor shall be admitted for them to the mandatum on Holy Thursday, and a collect be recited at the litanies and at Mass. And during their life and after death they and their sons and daughters shall share in all that is done for the service of God in the monastery of St Cuthbert, in Masses, psalms, alms, vigils, prayers. And for the king and queen from the day of their decease three full offices of the dead, and every day *Verba mea* (Ps. v). Each priest will sing thirty Masses, and each of the rest ten psalteries. And their anniversary to be celebrated festively every year, like that of King Athelstan."†

"Agreement between the monks of Westminster and the monks of Durham. When a Durham monk dies, seven full offices will be performed for him in Westminster in choir, and each priest sing for him one Mass, and the rest of the brethren one psalter; and the lay brethren who do not know the psalter will sing 150 Pater nosters. And the same from the monks of St Albans."‡

Sometimes, when an abbot died, a special messenger, called a Breviator, carrying the bead-roll (*brevia, rotuli*),§ went round to various monasteries with an account of the death and merits of the deceased, and soliciting spiritual alms. Each monastery entered its promise in the roll. Such an entry was called a *titulus*. Thus, when Vitalis, the Abbot of Savigny, died in 1122, the Abbey of Abingdon, in Berkshire, after its promise wrote the following lines:

Vita brevis, casusque levis, nec spes remanendi;  
Quanta seres, hinc tanta feres, sit cura parandi.  
Plura seras, ut plura feras, ne non seruisse  
Pœniteat, cum nil valeat tibi pœnituisse.

Then, lest the poet should seem by this moralizing to be reflecting on the negligence of the deceased abbot, the verses concluded with an address to St Peter:

Qui revocas quod in arce locas, Petre, jure potenti  
Huic aperi valvas, superi plaudant venienti.

It was not often, however, that the monks were so ambitious as the poet of Abingdon. The more common formula was

Vestris nostra damus, pro nostris vestra rogamus;

or,

Quod dedimus vestris et vos impendite nostris.

But, it may be asked, with all this care for monks, abbots, nobles and monarchs, was any one mindful of the souls of the poor? Surely this cannot be doubted, since care of the poor was one of the commonest alms for the souls of the rich. From the nature of the case, the record of Masses said for them cannot be gathered from wills and bead-rolls. I find, however, that a case of conscience was laid before Rabanus Maurus: "Can office and Masses be offered for a runaway slave?" He replies that though a bondman may not run away except in case of gross cruelty, yet certainly masses may be lawfully offered for

\* On this subject see Lingard, II, 58; Rock, II, 331; Soc. for 1847, by J. G. Nichols, on "Precatory or Mortuary Rolls." [Cf. "A mediæval Mortuary-Card in *The* also Martene, v, 13. † *Liber Vitæ*, p. 73. ‡ *Ib.*, p. 135. Month, Dec. 1896, and Ebner, *Gebets-verbruderungen.*]

§ See paper in the *Proceedings of the Archaeological*

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the repose of his soul.\* Monastic chronicles and saints' lives are full of touching examples of care for the poor during life and at death. Surely charity accompanied them beyond the tomb. Beautiful things are told of Agelwy, abbot of Evesham. He was elected abbot in the reign of St Edward, and, contrary to the lot of most Saxon abbots, he enjoyed the favour of William the Conqueror. William even made him governor of several of the midland counties; and he was held in great esteem by all the barons and great men of the time.

Agelwy's devotion and charity were as famous as his prudence. Besides the "army of poor," whom he fed and clothed, he kept twelve infirm men always with him, and supplied all their wants, and though some of them were lepers he washed their hands and feet every day with warm water. He required them to be present at Matins as well as at the day hours, and at both the Solemn Masses. He also gave welcome and hospitality to the great number of pilgrims who then flocked to our Lady of Evesham from Aquitaine and from Ireland. His charity, however, shone out most conspicuously when the fierce Conqueror, in retaliation for some marauding acts committed by the disbanded Saxon soldiers who infested the forest, laid waste the counties of Worcester, Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The fame of the Abbot of Evesham drew crowds of starving peasants from these counties. He helped them as far as possible, but often his help came too late, and they died of hunger and suffering, seven or eight a day, at the door of the monastery. Agelwy not only provided for their burial, but also took especial care of their orphan children, distributing them among the dependants of his abbey and providing for their education.

This great charity was fed by devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. On the night of the principal festivals throughout the year, to the honour of God and His saints, he kept a candle burning before each altar in the church.† He heard daily as many Masses as his duties would permit, and at each of them he would offer, with great compunction, one or more *denarii*. God blessed his abundant alms, and the abbey became rich under his rule. He found but twelve monks, he left thirty-six. He purchased many ornaments, chasubles, copes, altar-cloths, etc., and an altar beautifully worked in gold and silver. He built also a handsome chapel to St Nicholas, whose charities he imitated.

Agelwy died full of days on February 16, 1077, after making true confession and receiving the holy viaticum of the Body and Blood of the Lord, surrounded by his religious brethren and sons whom he had loved with a father's heart. He was an intimate friend of St Wulstan, who was his confessor (*pater suarum confessionum*).‡

The chronicler does not mention that Agelwy had Masses said for the souls of the poor peasants; but such a record was certainly needless for those to whom his faith and charity were thus published.

The people above the very lowest state, the small traders of towns and villages, formed themselves into guilds, and many of these supported a chaplain of their own, whose duty it was to say Mass for the brethren and sisters, living and dead. They even imposed the obligation of getting Masses said as a fine for breaking rules. Thus the rule of an ancient Saxon guild in Exeter, given by Mr Kemble,§ says: "This assembly was collected in Exeter for the love of God and for our soul's need, both in regard to our health here and to the after days

\* *Responsa Canonica*, apud Migne, tom. cx, p. 1192.

† [It is, perhaps, hardly safe to assume that this burning of lights before each altar was prompted by devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.]

‡ *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham* (Rolls Series), pp. 90-94.

§ *Saxons in England*, 1, App. D, p. 512.



# CHANTRIES AND REQUIEM MASSES

which we desire for ourselves by God's doom. Now we have agreed that our meeting shall be thrice in the twelve months, once at St Michael's Mass, secondly at St Mary's Mass after midwinter,\* and thirdly at Allhallows Mass† after Easter. . . . and let the Mass priest at each of our meetings sing two Masses, one for our living friends, the other for the dead; and let each brother of common condition sing two psalters of psalms, one for the living and one for the dead. And at the death of a brother each man sing six Masses, or six psalters of psalms. . . . And if any neglect the day, for the first time three Masses, for the second five," etc.

This one example will be sufficient if it is borne in mind that such guilds were widespread associations throughout the land from very early Saxon days to the Reformation. The priests themselves in cities were numerous enough to form themselves into guilds, for we find that Ethelmar, an ealdorman, by his will leaves two pounds to the guild of Mass-priests in Winchester, and one pound to that of deacons.‡

Thus, then, no one was excluded from the benefits of the Holy Sacrifice unless he willingly cut himself off from the Church; and even its special application was within the reach of all who were in life careful of their soul's salvation.

## CHAPTER VIII. CHANTRIES AND MASSES FOR THE DEAD

AS regards the offering of the Mass for special intentions, whether for the living or for the dead, there was no variation in doctrine or practice between the early and the later Church of England. Foundations, however, for such special intentions became more frequent as time went on, and the increase of chantries, or foundations for the celebration of the holy sacrifice, was so great in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as to constitute a prominent feature of ecclesiastical and religious life. Of this subject little is popularly known except certain abuses which were attacked by the medieval satirists. These have not been allowed to fall into oblivion by modern writers, and they have generally coupled with them the misrepresentations and calumnies of the ribalds of the Reformation period. Out of the great mass of documents that bear on the subject of chantries, I will try to select such as may impartially illustrate the belief and devotion of our ancestors in their several phases.

The following popular exposition of the teaching of the Church by the late Cardinal Vaughan will be found a useful introduction to the subject for those who are not familiar with Catholic doctrine:

"Theologians show that sacrifice, from its very nature and institution, possesses what they call a *general*, a *special* or *mediate*, and a *most special* fruit. The *general* belongs to the whole Church; the *most special* is personal to the offerers; and the *special* is free and applicable at the will and intention of the priest.

"To be made the recipient of that *special fruit* is a great privilege. It means remission of temporal punishment due to forgiven sins, and a fresh bestowal of precious gifts and graces drawn from the divine treasury of the Passion of our LORD.

\*Midwinter is Christmas; St Mary's Mass is therefore the Purification, Feb. 2.

†Probably May 13, *Natalis B. Mariæ ad martyres*, the Pantheon. ‡*Book of Hyde*, p. 364 (Rolls Series).

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“The heretic Wickliffe taught that special prayers and the special application of Masses were of no more avail to a soul than general prayers. The Church condemned this error. She has always held that special prayers offered for special purposes are of very great avail.

“When the priest offers the Mass for a special intention, we are to believe that what he thus does officially is ratified and accepted by the Chief Priest whose agent he is, unless He behold something imperfect, unworthy or unwise in that *special* intention.

“The greatest favour a priest can show you, next to offering the sacrifice for you, is to make a *memento* of you in the Mass. It is an honour and a great spiritual advantage to be named officially in the Holy Mysteries. It is like making a special presentation of you and of your necessities to our dear LORD and to the Adorable Trinity.

“From the earliest times, under the Old and the New Law, sacrifices have been offered for particular objects and persons.

“They have also always been offered for the souls in purgatory. The greatest love and mercy we can show to souls in purgatory is to pour out the merits of the cross upon them through the Mass. The Mass avails the souls in purgatory, both as an *impetratory* or *supplicatory*, and as a *propitiatory* or *satisfactory* sacrifice. . . .

“Make sacrifices that are *living*, pinch yourself *personally* while alive, to spread the faith, to establish religious education, to found charitable institutions, and otherwise to help the poor. This will avail you a hundredfold more than trusting to money (which you cannot take with you) left in alms for Masses and good works after death.

“But Catholics are justly shocked when a person with means, whether priest or layman, having fulfilled all natural obligations to others, dies without making any, even the least, provision for his own soul; especially when it is noted that during life he either denied himself nothing unless it were to increase his means, or showed no great liberality to the poor and to religion. . . .

“You may now perhaps ask, What are you to do when you desire to have a Mass applied according to your intention?

“You must ask a priest to offer the Mass for you. Of course he is not obliged, and indeed he may not be able, to do so. But you need have no delicacy in asking him, because this relation between the priest and the people is regulated by the Canon Law, which supposes that a *honorarium*, *tax*, *stipend* or *alms*, as it is variously called, should be given on the occasion.

“The Holy Scriptures lay down the principle that they who serve the altar shall live by the altar, and that they who minister to the people spiritual blessings shall receive, as St Augustine puts it, ‘their support from the people and their reward from the LORD.’ Whenever therefore you ask that the sacrifice be offered up especially and exclusively for your own intention, it is right that you should practically recognize this principle. If the priest accept the honorarium, it is a pledge to you that the Mass will be offered exclusively for your intention, for he is then bound by justice and under pain of sin so to offer it.

“To fix the amount of the honorarium in each diocese is not within the discretion of the priest, it is the duty of the bishop; ‘ad solum spectat episcopum,’ says Benedict XIV. In this country the canonical honorarium is *five* shillings.

“The stipend or honorarium must not be regarded as the price or equivalent of a Mass. Such a thought would be blasphemous, the holy sacrifice being beyond all price and of infinite value. It may be regarded, however, as



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canonical daily maintenance or as a slight recognition of the time, labour and self-denial of the priest, by which the people so reap the benefit.”\*

Should it be objected that the rich can thus obtain benefits that are out of the reach of the poor, it might be answered that the rich probably require more help than the poor, who have had much of their purgatory in this life. It is obvious that the same objection could be urged equally against God’s Providence in this world, since riches can purchase leisure, books, education, and helps of a thousand kinds denied to poverty; nevertheless our LORD has pronounced the poor in spirit blessed, since theirs is the kingdom of God. As God has His secret compensations in this world, by which He transforms the natural disadvantages of the poor into sources of blessings, so has He, in the next world, His mode of providing suffrages and succour for those souls that seem most forsaken. The application of the holy sacrifice is at the discretion of His infinite wisdom and charity.

Besides this—and I beg especial attention to the fact—our Catholic forefathers, in providing for their own souls, or in paying the debt of charity to the souls of their friends and relatives, never forget the more general claims of the whole Church suffering. There exist thousands of documents from which the truth of this assertion may be verified. In nearly every foundation deed—after specifying the intentions of the celebrant—it was added that the Masses should be “for all Christian souls,” or “for all the faithful departed,” or “for all Christian souls that God’s pleasure is to be prayed for.”

Before giving examples of these pious foundations it is necessary to say something about what is called the honorarium of the Mass, i.e., the offering made to the celebrant; and further, as bearing directly on the matter, to make one or two statements concerning the relative value of money. Cardinal Stephen Langton, in a provincial council in 1209, decreed that a vicar’s annual salary must not be less than five marks, i.e., £3 6s. 8d. As time went on, money decreased in value, so that Archbishop Simon Islip (1349-1362) increased the minimum to six marks, and Archbishop Simon Sudbury shortly after increased it to eight marks, or £5 6s. 8d. Later still Lyndwood, who died in 1446, commenting on these constitutions, declared that in his time priests required ten marks (£6 13s. 4d.), and that five were quite insufficient, even if the vicar had no other burdens but his own personal expenses; whereas he had to provide food or clothing for one clerk or more, according to the size of the parish, to exercise hospitality, to pay episcopal dues and to help his own poor relatives.†

On the suppression of chantries by Henry VIII and Edward VI their average net value was about £5 per annum, or £60 of our present money.‡ The average honorarium for offering Mass for a special intention at the beginning of the sixteenth century was four pence, which would be about four or five shillings to-day. When a fine of one hundred marks (over £60) was imposed by Elizabeth for hearing Mass, Pilkington thus delicately bantered on the subject: “The priests may speak well of the Gospel, if they would, or had any good natures in them. For their Mass was never so honoured, nor at so great a price as the gossellers have made it, at a hundred marks, whereas they will sell it for a groat

\* From the *People’s Manual on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, by the late Cardinal Vaughan, when Bishop of Salford, 1878.

† Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, l. 1, tit. 12, p. 64 (ed. 1679). Mr Anstey, in his *Introduction to the Munimenta Academica* (Rolls Series), p. 99, says: “In the fifteenth century money is known to have been much more valuable than in the thirteenth.” There

is probably here a slip of the pen, for what is said is quite contrary to the testimony of Lyndwood.

‡ With regard to money of the beginning of the sixteenth century, see Mr Brewer’s *Introduction to the Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. iv, p. 9, and p. 207. [The annual value of chantries has been discussed with some fullness by Dr Cutts, *Parish Priests and their People*, Lond. 1898, pp. 438-472.]

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(i.e., 4d.), and God forbid that ever it be better cheap.”\* He had his wish. Before many years the priest who said Mass was imprisoned, exiled and finally hung, drawn and quartered. But we will confine ourselves to the days of Pilkington’s childhood, before Luther had taught men to rail against the Holy Mass.

“The chantry priests,” says Canon Raines, “could hardly be otherwise than poor men, as their stipends were regulated by various statutes of the realm, and were always limited in amount; and the annual revenues of the Lancashire chantries ranged from thirty shillings to ten pounds, the average probably being not much more than eight marks, or £5 6s. 8d. each, per annum, after the payment of the deductions, reparations, quit-rents, and tenths to the Crown. . . .

“Occasionally we find an appropriate house and garden provided for the accommodation of the chantry priest; but for the most part he had one or two small rooms in a half-timbered hut, with little light, no fire-place, and an open chimney, with turf burning on the hearth between Michaelmas and Candlemas, and a yule log at Christmas. A bench or a stool, a wooden bedstead and a mattress of straw would comprise the furniture and household comforts of these ecclesiastics. It is hardly to be supposed that the priest had a servant to stock his larder or minister to his culinary wants, and he probably prepared his own frugal fare. This would consist of salted meat twice a week. On the day of his patron saint, or on some great anniversary, he would have fresh meat and fish, and on high festivals a double mess. Beans to boil, and oatmeal for porridge, with ‘haberdine,’ ling, red-herrings, cheese, oat-cake and apples, would be ordinary food, whilst eggs, coarse barley-bread, and fresh fish would be amongst the luxuries of the table, and were not very sumptuous refectations. The repeated fasts of the Church would not be, with such a dietary, inconvenient duties.”† What has just been quoted applies to those who were strictly called cantarists or chantry priests, and whose only benefice consisted in a foundation for daily Mass. At the same time masses were asked of other priests, both secular and religious. In the twelfth century, according to Giraldus, the rural and parochial priests had the largest share in these.‡ In later times they were mostly given to the friars.

The alms or honorarium given to the priest varied from one penny to six pence, as may be seen in the many examples of ancient wills that have come down to us.

The Church did not fail to watch against the abuses which the spirit of avarice is ever bringing into the sanctuary. Thus, we find in the Council of Lambeth in 1281, the bishops warned priests that “no cleric must undertake a year’s Masses (*annualia celebranda*) unless he himself celebrate every day for the deceased or have Mass offered for him. No one must undertake more *annualia* than he has priests to help him, except when the person who has the Masses said explicitly consents that the memory of the deceased be joined with that of another or of others in the Mass.”§ It was strictly forbidden to enjoin as a penance the paying for the celebration of Masses.||

On the other hand, the Church did not admit the doctrine of Giraldus, that the guilt of simony is incurred whenever any kind of contract is entered into with regard to saying Mass. This author, indeed, whom I have frequently quoted as a witness to facts, and who often displays both learning and acuteness, is no less frequently remarkable for his want of judgement. A curious specimen of sophistical censoriousness occurs in his treatise on this very subject. “Those,” he says, “who agree to say Mass on account of having received

\* *Works*, p. 506 (Parker Society).

† *History of the Lancashire Chantries*, by the Rev. F. R. Raines, Introd., p. 20 (Chetham Society).

‡ *Gemma Eccl.* dist. 11, cap. 24.

§ Wilkins, 11, 52.

|| Wilkins, 1, 505, 576, 577, 635.



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payment, sell CHRIST more basely than Judas. He sold ONE whom he believed to be a mere man, and that too when his own family was in penury. They sell Him whom they believe to be the LORD of the universe; he for thirty pieces of silver, they for a penny or some such wretched sum. He repented, though not truly, and cast away his money; they never do so. In the case of Judas the money, being the price of blood, was not put into the treasury; whereas now altars are erected and churches built with money thus shamefully procured.”\* Surely thus to compare the accepting of money for performance of a most holy act with the bargain to shed our LORD’s Blood is a strange paradox. And to be shocked as at something peculiarly monstrous, when a pious priest dedicated the alms thus received to the decoration of his church, is the very climax of absurdity. In the same place, Giraldus says that both Mass and the preaching of the Word of GOD ought to be rare in order that they may be esteemed! Happily, our LORD judged otherwise. Had He sought merely to inspire veneration or admiration, He might have given the power to offer Mass to the successors of St Peter alone, and have even restricted them to one Mass in the year, on Easter Day. Whereas by allowing every priest in every village church to say Mass daily, though He has robbed Himself of some external glory or of the admiration we give to what is extraordinary, he has nevertheless consulted the true glory of His Father as well as the good of His redeemed, and won thereby the gratitude and love of those who esteem things for their intrinsic value. But Giraldus, in his mistaken notions about simony, and sincere though imprudent zeal for GOD’s honour and glory, would have wished to see few churches, and few altars in them, and would have abolished almost all voluntary and occasional offerings. He quotes the precedent of the old law, where there was but one temple and one altar; and expresses a wish that there should be but one church in each city, or in a very populous place one church with a few succursals. “It would be better,” he says, “far better, if the churches were fewer, and Mass more rarely said in them, and then celebrated and heard more devoutly.”† Giraldus here assumes two principles—first, that frequent repetition, like familiarity, always breeds contempt; and secondly, that what is done rarely is sure to be done well. Giraldus was a Welshman, and not unacquainted with the writings of his countryman, St Gildas; yet he seems to have forgotten the terrible words in which Gildas had denounced the ancient British priests, “raro celebrantes, et nunquam puro corde ante altaria stantes.”

Robert de Brunne had very different views. In 1303, he wrote as follows: “That priest I blame over all thing—that without skill letteth” (i.e., omitteth) “to sing” (i.e., to say Mass)—“For many a soul might be saved—With the Mass that he hath leaved—For all that in pain is—Abideth the succour of the Mass.”‡

In the sixteenth century, in order to screen the avarice of spoliation, cries were got up against superstitious endowments and the avarice of priests; and as these cries have not yet ceased to echo, it is as well to consider what the facts were, and to examine whether Catholics have much need to blush for their ancestors.

Pilkington, whose works are a very mine of scurrility§ and calumny, thus writes: “I think it hath not been oft heard tell of, that any priest ever said trental

\* *Gemma Eccl.*, dist. II, cap. 24.

† *Gemma Eccles.*, dist., II, cap. 49.

‡ *Handlyng Synne*, l. 10304 (E. E. T. Soc.)

§ Priests are called by Bishop Pilkington, Sir John Smell-smoke (*Works*, p. 255), or Sir John Lack-Latin (p. 20), or Sir John Mumble-matins (p. 26), or the pope’s oiled shavellings (p. 82), or the pope’s belly-

gods (p. 580); bishops are the pope’s horned cattle (p. 664), in allusion to their mitres; monks are abbey lubbers (*passim*), Hildebrand is Hell-brand (p. 565), St Thomas (of Canterbury) is a stinking martyr, Cardinal Pole is Carnal Fool (pp. 65, 77), purgatory is the pope’s scalding house (p. 497), the Mass is the popish clouted Latin Mass (p. 496).

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without money, or hired any to be said for themselves.”\* With this assertion may be contrasted the statement of a recent writer who has carefully looked into the history of chantries. Canon Raines then has been struck with the fact that, when foundations for Masses were made for limited periods, “a short course seems to have been prescribed by laymen, whilst archbishops and curates who taught the doctrine (and the confession is humiliating) needed ages to purify them.”† We here venture to differ with the learned writer. The confession is not at all humiliating; on the contrary, it is most edifying. It proves, not that bishops and priests really needed so much purification, but that they thought they needed it, or might need it. They were mindful of the words of the Book of Wisdom: “Give ear, you that rule the people . . . a most severe judgement shall be for them that bear rule. For to him that is little mercy is granted; but the mighty shall be mightily tormented.”‡ They had not forgotten how much larger a measure of penance was exacted by the ancient canons from the clergy than from the laity; and it was a deeper sense of sin and a clearer insight into the sanctity of God, not a more guilty conscience, that made them so anxious to secure suffrages. Nor must it be thought that bishops and priests showed herein less confidence in God than the laity, for to hope in the Mass is nothing else but to hope in the precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST. In any case the fact mentioned by Canon Raines effectually disposes of the charge of disbelief or of avarice made by Pilkington.

History is full of proofs that priests had the most lively faith in the holy Mass, and dispensed with great liberality the priceless treasure that God had put in their hands. William Greenfield, Archbishop of York, wrote to Pope Clement V on October 20, 1306, to inform him that he had no less than 22,503 Masses offered for him during the course of that year, besides innumerable other prayers.§ Still more remarkable is the generosity of a predecessor of Greenfield, Archbishop John Romain. Edward I had written to him on November 28, 1290, announcing the death of Queen Eleanor, and asked for prayers and Masses, “that as she herself could no longer merit, she might be helped by the charitable prayers of others.” The following year, on June 7, the archbishop replied to the king that the number of Masses that he had ordered to be said in his diocese in all parish churches and chapels where there were priests celebrating amounted to 47,528; and he had also granted forty days’ indulgence to all who said a Pater and an Ave for the repose of the queen’s soul.|| At the time this letter was written the Masses were not all said, for the archbishop had directed his priests to offer the Mass for this intention each Wednesday for the space of one year. As he specifies the exact number to be said, he must have had some method of calculating, and it was evidently the following. He multiplied the number of weeks by that of his priests:  $52 \times 914 = 47,528$ . Hence, we get the curious and surprising fact that at the end of the thirteenth century the number of priests in the archdiocese of York was 914.¶

Bishops who showed such care for the souls of others were not likely to neglect their own. Thus William de Kilkeny, Bishop of Ely, dying in 1256, left two hundred marks to his church to find two chaplains to celebrate perpetually for his soul.\*\* Walter Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter (1308–1327) during his lifetime founded a perpetual Mass. The Mass of the Holy Ghost was to be said on

\*Works, p. 21.

†Introduct. to *History of the Lancashire Chantries*, p. 15 (Chetham Soc.)

‡Wisdom vi, 3-7.

§*Historical Papers, etc., from the Northern Registers*, p. 178 (Rolls Series).

||*Ib.*, p. 91.

¶It is not certain that the regular clergy were included in the number 914, or even all secular priests.

But it seems more probable that all had agreed to offer Mass once a week. From a list of places to which preachers of the crusade were sent in 1291, it appears that the diocese of York included Nottingham, Newark, Lancaster, Preston, and Kendal. (*Northern Registers*, p. 95.)

\*\**Anglia Sacra*, i, 636.



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his birthday as long as he lived, and a Mass of Requiem for ever on the anniversary of his death.\* But it is not possible to read the records of any of the great bishops of the Middle Ages without finding that, besides spending immense sums on their cathedrals, they uniformly made provision for Masses for their souls, either by their wills or by founding chantries during life.

Who more famous for his munificence during his lifetime than William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester? He did not, however, trust in the glorious cathedral which has immortalized his name. The monks bound themselves to him to have three perpetual daily Masses offered in the chapel that he had chosen for his burial-place. The first, of our Lady, was to be said at a very early hour, the second at tierce, and the third at sext. The prior bound himself to give daily to each monk one penny of good coinage, and the sacristan to provide them with bread and wine, chalice, missal and vestments. The monks were to be appointed for these Masses each Saturday for the following week. The choir boys also, who were maintained by the prior, were to go every evening to this chapel and sing the "Salve Regina," or the "Ave Regina," and afterwards to say "De Profundis" and prayers for the bishop's soul.†

The cathedral still exists; but alas! the chapel where Wykeham lies is a show-place. Mass is not said there in the morning, nor the Antiphon of our Lady sung in the evening; and if a Catholic visit the spot, the Lamentations of Jeremias are the only prayers that rise to his lips.

Of the faith and devotion of men less eminent in wealth or dignity the following may be taken as specimens. In 1392, Robert Kniveton, vicar of Dove-bridge, in Derbyshire, founded a chantry in his church at the altar of the Blessed Virgin. His brother Henry, rector of Norbury, founded a chantry in the same year at Ashbourne.‡ Henry Chaddesdon, archdeacon of Leicester, who died in 1354, appointed by his will the establishment of a chantry in his native place of Chaddesdon, Derbyshire, with three priests, to sing Mass for the King, for himself, for his ancestors and benefactors and for the souls of all the faithful departed.§ Few priests were rich enough to found chantries. Their wills, however, which exist in great numbers, testify to their solicitude to have Masses offered for them. Sir Oliver Bright, Rector of Weston Favell, Northamptonshire, writes: "I will that Sir Edward Wammersley, if it please him, or else another honest priest, say Masses for my soul, Master Doctor Wammersley's soul, and those souls that I am most bound to pray for, for the space of half a year, and to have for his labour four marks." || Dr Spark, in 1527, directs his executors "to wage a priest that is sad, virtuous and good of living, and of good name and fame, to pray for my soul, my father's and mother's and such as shall be named, and all Christian souls; and the said priest to sing Mass within the White Friars at the high altar, and he to have my Missal to say Mass upon as long as he doth sing for me, and then the aforesaid book to remain to the place." ¶

Even the priests who had no money to leave by will were not forgotten. Sometimes they belonged to guilds, the members of which always had Masses said for their deceased brethren. Thus the chantry priests of St Paul's in London had formed themselves into a special corporation or guild.\*\* Besides this the

\* Oliver's *Monast. Exon.*, p. 80.

† Lowth's *Life of Wykeham*, Appendix xvi.

‡ Cox's *Derbyshire Churches*, III, 117.

§ *Ib.*, p. 304.

|| Baker's *Northampton*, I, 76.

¶ *Lancashire Wills*, p. 18 (Chetham Soc.)

\*\* See Rock, III, pt. 2, p. 121. Nearly one hundred chantries had been founded in St Paul's, but some were united, having been insufficiently endowed. At the dissolution there were thirty-five with fifty-four priests daily celebrating. There were likewise many obits, or anniversaries. (Dugdale's *St Paul's*, p. 29).

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priests of each diocese formed a distinct body. The two following documents may be taken as indications of the practice that prevailed throughout the country. William Russell, Bishop of Sodor, 1350, in his synodal constitutions orders that when any rector, vicar or chaplain of the Church of Man dies, all the priests must come to his funeral, and if possible say Mass. And after the day of his burial every priest must, with as little delay as possible, offer thirty Masses for him, and recite for thirty days the Office of the Dead with nine lessons. If they have not accomplished these duties within sixty days, the deans are to fine them half a mark, and with the fines to get the Masses said.\* Robert Winchelsey, the holy Archbishop of Canterbury who could never offer Mass without tears, obliged all the officials of his consistory to assist at a solemn Mass of the Holy Ghost in the Church of our Lady of the Arches in London at the beginning of each term, and at a solemn Requiem for all the deceased officials at the end of the term.†

We now turn to the laity. It is needless to say much of royal foundations; Catholic kings could scarcely neglect a matter so important. Yet it will be found that those who were best and greatest were most careful, whereas those who were immoral and impious seem to have anticipated the Protestant view as to "superstitious uses," and spent their money in personal gratification. Fabyan tells us that Henry IV had been absolved by the Pope for the deposition and (supposed) murder of Richard II, on condition that he should do as much as possible for Richard's soul. Henry took little heed of this condition; but his nobler son, Henry V, tried to make up, and for this end founded the great monasteries of Sheen and Syon. He kept four tapers perpetually burning on the tomb of Richard, and every week had Office and Solemn Mass said for his soul.‡ Of Henry V's care for his own soul I have spoken elsewhere.§ The provisions of other kings and queens are of the same nature.

From the wills of the great nobles it is apparent that one of their principal solitudes when death approached was with respect to the spiritual helps that the Church could bestow upon them. Out of a great multitude of such documents I transcribe two or three by way of specimen.||

Lucy, Countess of Kent, in her will (1423), leaves to the prior and convent of the Holy Trinity without Aldgate, London, one thousand crowns, upon condition "that they find a fitting priest to celebrate divine service daily to the end of the world, in each of the religious houses of St Mary Overies, in Southwark, the Carthusians, Minoreesses and Holy Trinity without Aldgate; and in the Abbey of Brunne, as also the four houses of Friars Mendicants in London, for the health of the soul of Henry IV and King Henry V, late kings of England, for the souls of Edmund, late Earl of Kent, my husband, for my own soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed. I will that in every of these houses they shall yearly celebrate the anniversaries of the said Edmund and me; likewise that every brother and sister in these houses shall every day say the psalm of 'De Profundis' with the wonted orison for the dead, for the souls of the said Edmund and my soul by name, and once every month in their choir say 'Placebo' and 'Dirige' by note, and on the morrow Mass of Requiem by note for our souls, and once in every year a trental of St Gregory for our said souls by name; . . . and I desire that two honest priests shall celebrate divine service for ever for the health of my soul and the soul of my said husband, one of them in the church

\* Wilkins, III, 10.

† Wilkins, II, 2111.

‡ Fabyan's *Chronicle*, p. 589 (ed. Ellis).

§ See above p. 89.

|| Many more examples are given in the two volumes called *Testamenta Vetusta*, published by Sir Harris Nicolas.



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where my body shall be buried, and the other in the church of the Minors without Aldgate.”\*

What, it will be asked, was St Gregory’s trental mentioned in this will, and often elsewhere? It consisted of ten different Masses three times repeated. The Masses were: the Nativity of our LORD, the Epiphany, our Lady’s Purification and Annunciation, our LORD’s Resurrection and Ascension, Pentecost, The Trinity and our Lady’s Assumption and Nativity.

These ben the chefe festes ten  
That sokor the sowles that ben fro heven;  
Who so sayth these Masses without fayle  
For synfull sowles they shall avayle:  
All a yere withouten trayne  
They delyvere a sowle out of payne.  
Let say these Masses be your hestes  
Within the utas of the festes.†

According to this author each Mass is to be said thrice within the octaves of the respective feasts, so that the whole could not be performed in less than nine months. But by others they were said in thirty consecutive days, and even by thirty priests in one day.‡ There is no doubt that, though there was nothing amiss in the selection of these Masses, yet there was mistake or superstition in attributing to them a special efficacy; and it was not true that either the selection or the promise was derived from St Gregory the Great. The practice was denounced by several writers and condemned by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The Congregation, however, did not forbid the pious custom of saying Mass for a soul on thirty consecutive days, a custom that was really derived from St Gregory, and adopted by several religious orders.§ Nor must it be thought that whenever a trental of Masses is mentioned allusion is always made to the supposed Gregorian trental.||

Another practice no better founded than the above is alluded to in the following will: “I bequeath seven marks sterling to a priest for to sing or to say

\* *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 205.

† Cotton MS. *Calig. A. 11*, fol. 85b, 86, quoted by Hampson in the *Medii Aevi Kalendarium*, 11, 139. The York Missal, published by Mr Henderson, gives the same list in the same order, p. 436, with the words: “Qui vult deliberare animam cito de poenis purgatorii dicat istas missas sequentes.” The Bollandists give from old German Missals a totally different list of Masses. (*Propyl. Maii, Conatus Histor.*, p. 93.) I have given what I have found in English authorities. [The practice abroad varied considerably. See in particular K. Eberle, *Der Tricenarius des heiligen Gregorius*, Regensburg, 1890.]

‡ “Upon the day of my burial I will to be said a trental of Masses.” (Will of Thomas Croughton, 1530, *Lancashire Wills*, Chetham Soc.) [The bequests in the case of many of these trentals of St Gregory are somewhat puzzling. Thus William Faunt, in 1485, leaves £10 to the Vicar of Bredyn “to celebrate a trental of St Gregory in the said church for my soul for one year.” How a trental was to be said for one year is not too obvious. £10 would normally represent about 300 Masses.]

§ On this matter see Bened. XIV. *De Sacrif. Missæ*, III, cap. 23, and the authors quoted by him; to whom may be added Rock, *Church of our Fathers*, II, 319, 504, 508, III, 60.

|| [Father Bridgett does not mention one form of devotion which was much in vogue at the end of the fifteenth and in the early years of the sixteenth century. Certain churches in England seem to have obtained in-

dulgences alleged to be identical with those attached to the altar of the chapel of the Scala Cœli at Tre Fontane, outside the walls of Rome. They were the prototype for England of what are now known as the indulgences of the “privileged altar.” The Austin Friars at Canterbury, amongst others, had such a privilege, and we know of numerous wills which make special mention of it. Thus in 1530 Sir Nicholas Hewys, of Monkton in Thanet, when leaving bequests to the above-mentioned Friars, directed that a priest was to “say five Masses at the Scala Cœli altar, and have 20d.” (Duncan & Hussey, *Testamenta Cantiana*, II, p. 66.) Much earlier than this, in July 1490, Henry VII had written to Pope Innocent VIII: “As our mother the Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby, is desirous that the chapel she has chosen for her sepulture may be distinguished by Apostolic indulgences, she has besought us to intercede with your Holiness to grant, as well for the soul of our said mother as for the souls of those deceased, for whom Masses shall be celebrated in the said chapel, the indulgences and remission of sins, granted to the chapel called of the Blessed Mary ‘De Scala Cœli,’ within the Church or outside the Church of the Cistercian Monastery of St Anastasius, outside the walls of Rome.” (Rawdon Brown, *Calendar of Venetian State-Papers*, I, p. 193.) We find that such grants as that here petitioned for occur not unfrequently in the *Regesta* of Pope Leo X. The church of St Thomas de Acon, London, for example, was the recipient of such a grant in 1513 (Hergenröther, *Regesta Leonis X*, n. 3444). The na-

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Mass for my soul a whole year at Badworth Church, the same Masses that Pope Innocent did sing for his mother, which be thirteen Masses. And when the said priest hath sung or said all the thirteen Masses over, he shall begin them again, and so continue from time of my decease during a whole year.”\* This was an eccentricity of devotion. The records of noble houses are better illustrated by the following examples:

Richard, Earl of Arundel, 1375, leaves, to purchase lands and rents for the monks of Lewes, two hundred pounds; “otherwise, that one or two churches be appropriated to that monastery for the maintenance of two monks to celebrate two Masses perpetually every day, for the souls of my father and mother, my wife and my children, and successors, and all Christian people, in the Chapel of St Thomas the Martyr in that house, or else in the chapel of our Lady on the north of the great church; the one Mass to be that of our Lady and the other of the Holy Ghost. And I will that every prior of that house, on his first government, shall swear to see the same performed.

“Likewise I bequeath a thousand marks to purchase lands of the annual value of one hundred and seven marks for the maintenance of six priests and three choristers, to celebrate divine service every day by note in the chapel of my castle at Arundel, and to pray for the souls of my father and mother, my wife and children and all Christians. I will that they rise every day in summer at sunrising, and in winter at break of the day,”† etc.

Thomas, Earl of Warwick, 1400, writes: “For my funeral I will that there be three hundred pounds’ weight of wax, in six tapers and seven mortars which shall remain in the church; also that sixty poor men, in gowns made of white cloth, carry each of them a torch at my funeral, and that forty of these torches, after my exequies, be distributed to poor churches of my patronage, the remainder to remain in the Collegiate Church of Warwick. . . . I desire that thirty trentals be sung for my soul with all possible speed that may be after my decease, and likewise one thousand Masses, viz., of the Trinity, of the Holy Ghost, of the Nativity of our Saviour, of the Holy Cross, of the five festivals of our Lady, of the Resurrection, of the Ascension, of Corpus Christi, of every feast sixty-seven Masses, five in the whole excepted. . . . To my lord the king an image of the Blessed Virgin. . . . To the college of our Lady at Warwick . . . a precious stone called a berill, bound with silver and enamelled, to put the Host into,”‡ etc.

John Holland, Duke of Exeter, 1447, leaves these instructions: “My body to be buried in a chapel in the church of St Katherine, beside the Tower of London, at the north end of the high altar. . . . To the high altar of the said church a cup of berill, garnished with gold and precious stones, to put the Holy Sacrament in. Also a chalice of gold, with the whole furniture of my chapel. I will that another chalice, two basins, two silver candlesticks, with the two

ture of this indulgence is thus described in a document drafted by Cardinal Raymund, the Legate of Pope Alexander VI in Germany, and sent to John Palz, the author of the *Cælifodina* (Append. quæst. 9). After mentioning four other altars in Rome at which each Mass had the privilege of releasing a soul from purgatory, the Cardinal says: “The chapel of the Scala Cæli is the second chapel in the whole world founded in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and here St Bernard deserved to see a ladder erected reaching to heaven. All who celebrate Masses or cause Masses to be celebrated at this altar for souls that are detained in purgatory, may count on the speedy deliverance of

the said souls through the merits of the saint and Blessed Virgin Mary” (Barbier de Montault, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. iv, p. 189). It should be noticed, however, that the indulgence of the privileged altar as it actually exists apparently belongs to a later date, and that it is to be connected historically with a privilege believed to attach to the altar at which St Gregory celebrated Mass in his monastery of St Andrea on the Cælian Hill.]

\* Will of Sir Hugh Starkey of Olton, 1526, *Lancashire Wills*, p. 11.

† *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 94.

‡ *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 155.



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pair of vestments, and Mass-book, a pax-bred, and a pair of cruets of silver, be given to that little chapel, for the priests that should celebrate therein and pray for our souls; to the priest and clerks and others of the house of St Katherine, for their great labours and observance on the day of my obit and day of my funeral, forty marks. I will that four priests be provided to pray perpetually every year for my soul in the said chapel, and for the souls of Anne, my first wife, and of my sister Constance, and of Anne, my present wife, when she shall pass out of this world, and for the souls of all my ancestors,"\* etc.

It must be admitted, however, that these and the like elaborate bequests and directions did not please or edify all concerned. Waldensis, after quoting a passage of St Jerome, says: "The holy father well rebukes the ambition of the rich and powerful, who, when they have offered anything to the Church of CHRIST, erect their titles, require that their names shall be recited, demand a perpetual labour from priests, while for so great a recompense they themselves have scarce ever undertaken a three-days' work. And what is a still greater wrong, they convert (as St Jerome says), that which is merely the redemption of their sins into a monument to their praise. For the spoils they have wrung from the poor, for the devastation of the land, for their violation of virgins and widows, for their transgression of the fasts, for their unnumbered lies, frauds, perjuries and detractions, for their hatred, anger, murderous quarrels and violences, they ask God at this little cost to pardon them; and then, besides this weighing out their merits, as if they had conferred a benefit on God, they are more occupied in estimating the magnitude of their gift than contrite with horror of their crimes. In very truth, if the rich have made large offerings, yet the poor widow with the offering of her two mites will ever surpass them."†

Without contesting the justness of these strictures in certain cases, I think it would be quite contrary to the intention of the illustrious writer to generalize them. It was not alone the proud, worldly and wicked nobles, that left foundations for Masses. These often died with scanty provision for their souls, whereas those whose lives had been well spent, and who during life had been most generous to the Church, were consistent in their anxiety for her suffrages.

There is good proof, too, that men were not so ignorant as to think that by getting prayers and Masses for their own souls they could be released from obligations of justice to their neighbour or dispensed from the duty of restitution. There is a clause frequently to be found in these foundations which proves that the injured parties were to have their share of the suffrages. The Duchess of Montrose, in making a foundation for the choristers of Brechin, not only mentions certain souls to be benefited, but also adds "especially for all to whom I was ever a debtor or have in any way injured, or have had their goods and have not made full satisfaction."‡ John Smart, in 1449, founded a chaplaincy in the same cathedral "for the souls whom I may have injured and to whom I have not perfectly atoned."§ David de Lindesay, Earl of Crawford, in 1406, likewise founds a chantry or chaplaincy. It is for his father and mother, his predecessors and successors, and especially for all those whose goods he may have had during life and whom he had not fully satisfied, and for all the faithful departed.|| It is evident that this was an established formula, and that it does not prove that those who used it had really wronged any, but merely that the claims of justice were recognized in the most explicit manner.

One of the most curious wills I have met with is that of John Baret, a gentle-

\* *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 255.

† *De Sacramentalibus Missæ*, cap. 33.

‡ *Registrum Episc. Brech.* 1, 220 (Bannatyne Club).

§ *Ib.*, 1, 125.

|| *Ib.*, 1, 23.

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man of Bury St Edmund's, who died in 1463. He is most precise in his instructions as to the Masses at his funeral and the sermon. He orders "the pardon which I purchased to be written near my tomb, and the bull and bishops' seals to be carefully secured near." How some dabblers in history would exclaim at this! "A pardon" or an indulgence "purchased"! Here is simony, here is superstition; here is trusting in the Pope's blasphemous prerogatives to the neglect of all true religion and pure morality! Not so, dear Protestant reader. John Baret's armorial motto (or "reason," as he calls it) written on his tomb was "Grace me govern," and he does not seem to have belied it. The word "purchase" is badly chosen,\* but he wrote for those who knew his meaning. He had given a sum of money for some pious purpose, and an indulgence had been granted him, of what extent is not said; but it did not make him sure of going straight to heaven at his death according to the plenary indulgence claimed by all Protestants. The very reason why he asks that this document shall be placed near his tomb is "that it may be read and known to exhort the people rather to pray for me." It was probably then an indulgence to those who said a Pater or an Ave for him. It did not make him despise prayers as unnecessary, but eager to secure them, and further he makes provision for a perpetual weekly Mass. I quote this will especially, because this good Catholic gentleman, who purchases a pardon, desires that the Masses shall be offered not for himself alone, but for all whom he may have in any way injured or had dealings with, "that God grant for His mercy that they nor I bear never no peril neither for the giving nor for the receiving, for any matter that ever I had to do. Praying Almighty God that they have part of every good deed I have done, or shall be done in my life, or shall be done after my decease for me, in Masses, singing, almsgiving, etc., as well as myself in relieving and comfort of their souls and mine."†

He who will make inquiry into the subject of legacies for Mass will find that among citizens, no less than among the nobles, the more generous and pious during life were the most solicitous to propitiate God's justice after death. Roger Thornton was bailiff of Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1397; represented Newcastle in Parliament in 1399, 1410 and 1416; and was the founder of the Maison Dieu or hospital in that town. This active and benevolent citizen directs in his will, that thirty priests sing for him two years next after his decease, "ilk priest having for his sould (i.e., payment) by year eight marks."‡

The famous Sir William Walworth, Mayor of London, who struck down Wat Tyler, and whose statue adorns Holborn Viaduct, not only founded a college for a master and nine priests in the church of St Michael, Crooked Lane, in 1380, but in his will bequeaths "to every anchoret in London and in the vicinity 12d.; to every hospital 20s.; to every chaplain of the fraternity of chaplains in London, of which I am a brother, that they may have my soul remembered in Masses and prayers, 2s.; to celebrate within three days after my decease as many Masses as can conveniently be done, 20l.;" and he also bequeathed innumerable and very large sums in alms.§

Sir John Milbourne was elected Lord Mayor of London in 1521, and had the honour of entertaining Henry VIII and the Emperor Charles V on their visit to the City June 6, 1522, when he went out "well horsed and dressed in scarlet" to meet their majesties. His will is dated June 10, 1535. "My executors to have 1,000 Masses said or sung for my soul within three months after my death, which

\*[No. *Purchase* in old Eng. meant procure, not buy.]

† *Bury Wills*, pp. 15-36 (Camden Soc.)

‡ *Wills, etc., of the Northern Counties*, p. 79 (Surtees Soc.)

§ Bentley's *Excerpta Historica*, p. 137.



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Masses are to be sung by priests who have not any benefices, and who are not charged to pray for any other; every priest to have for his labour 6d.; to 153\* poor men and women each a black gown of cloth, a black gown of linen or cotton, and a pair of black beads, to assist at my burial and Mass of Requiem, and to pray specially for my soul and the souls of my wives. . . . To thirteen poor people of Long Melford thirteen penny loaves every Sunday for ten years after my death, on condition that they kneel before the Holy Sacrament at the High Altar in the Church of Long Melford, and say there a Pater noster, Ave, and Credo for my soul and the souls aforesaid. The Churchwarden of Long Melford to have 4s. per annum for distributing these thirteen loaves, and my executors to distribute £6 13s. 4d. among the poor of Long Melford within thirty days after my death.”†

Sir John de Poultney was born at the village of Pontenei or Pultonherth in Leicestershire. “He was a person,” says Mr Aungier, “of very great account in his time, much in favour with Edward III, and is taken notice of by our historians for his piety, wisdom, large possessions and magnificent way of living. His ardour in commercial pursuits met with a suitable reward in the approbation of his fellow-citizens and in the favour of his prince, to which he recommended himself not only by the wealth he acquired but by a talent for business beyond the particular branch in which he was engaged, and the real merit by which he added dignity to riches, and invested an English merchant with a claim to greatness. The particular branch of business to which he applied his talents was probably that of a draper, an occupation which heretofore was very considerable, in consequence of the great quantities of woollen cloths which were exported to the continent. He is denominated a member of the Drapers’ Company, and to the honour of that body discharged the high office of mayor no less than four times in the reign of Edward III, although he never served the office of sheriff. . . . In 1331 the king drew the attention of Sir John to the state of the chantries in the City of London, which it appears were in many instances robbed of the funds destined to their support. And it is not improbable that the abuses which came before him on this occasion in his official character first suggested to him the idea of becoming the restorer and amplifier of one of those ancient foundations. In 1332 the king, at his request, wrote to the Pope from Woodstock, that his faithful John de Poultney, for expiation of his sins, had erected and dedicated a chantry chapel in honour of the Holy Cross, adjoining to the Church of St Laurence in Candlewick Street for seven priests to perform divine service there; and desired his Holiness to sanction the appropriation of the said church by the abbot and convent of Westminster to the uses of the chantry priests. . . . Besides his foundation of Corpus Christi College in the parish of St Laurence, Sir John founded the White Friars in Coventry. He likewise built the Church of Allhallows the Less in Thames Street. Among other good deeds he bequeathed 53s. 4d. annually to the prisoners in Newgate, and £10 a year to St Giles’s hospital by Holborn for ever. Stowe informs us that he built a fair chapel in St Paul’s and was there buried in 1349.”†

It is evident that in the century that preceded the change of religion the solemnities at funerals and anniversaries were becoming excessive and burdensome, and as their number was ever increasing, some remedy would soon have become necessary had not the abolition of the Mass solved the difficulty in another way.

\* So Dean Colet founded St Paul’s School for 153 boys. The miraculous draught of fishes, 153 in number (John xxi, 11), has always been a favourite subject of contemplation with the citizens of London.

† *Genealogical Memoirs of the Extinct Family of Chester of Chicheley*, 1, 27, 28 (1878).

‡ *Chroniques de London*, edited by Mr Aungier for the Camden Society, p. 65.

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At the burial of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, on April 28, 1489, five hundred priests and a thousand clerks were invited to attend. The wax alone cost £80, and the total expenses were more than a £1,000 or £12,000 at the present value of money.\*

Isabel, Duchess of Clarence, died at Warwick Castle on December 12, 1476. Her body was brought for sepulture to Tewkesbury Abbey, of which she had been a benefactress. On January 4, solemn office was sung with nine lessons, absolutions given by bishops and abbots; and the household of the duke watched by night around the body of the young duchess. On January 5, 1477, the vigil of the Epiphany, the first Mass, which was of our Lady, was sung in our Lady's chapel by the suffragan of the Bishop of Lincoln; the second Mass, of the Blessed Trinity, by the abbot at the high altar; and the third of Requiem by the suffragan of the Bishop of Worcester; and during this Peter Weld, a doctor of theology of the order of Friars Minor of Worcester, preached to the prelates and others in the choir. The body remained under the hearse in the midst of the choir for thirty-five days, and solemn exequies were daily celebrated. At last, on the octave of the Purification, after Mass, the body was buried in a vault behind the high altar and in front of the chapel of our Lady.† As each great family vied with others in the splendour of the exequies of their deceased relatives, the living would soon have been wholly occupied in caring for the dead. The evil was felt, and in many wills at the beginning of the sixteenth century the display of vain and unnecessary pomp is deprecated.

As to foundations; though several Mortmain Acts had restricted the power of alienating land for religious purposes, yet the number of chantries in England was very great. Henry VIII suppressed 2,374 just before his death, but with strange inconsistency he left orders that Masses should be said for himself *for ever*, and "requiring his son Prince Edward, and all his heirs and successors who should be kings of this realm, as they would answer before Almighty God at the dreadful day of judgement, to carry out this his will."

In 1 Edward VI, Parliament "gave the youthful king the last sweepings of the chantry lands of which his father had, from any cause, not held full possession."‡

"The government," says Canon Raines, "considered the property of these foundations not so much national property as the property of the king, who was ready to secularize and monopolize it for any purpose he pleased. Principles of equity, justice and legal security were set at naught, and the recognized rights of property disregarded. That the State had not furnished the endowments, or done anything for the support of the chantries, was obvious to every one. The endowments were all individual donations from age to age. The State had even limited the donors in their benefactions, but had guaranteed to protect what they had given, and then violated the promise."§

Of course Henry, in the commission that he issued, said that it was his wish that the carrying out of the power given him by Parliament "should wholly tend to the glory of Almighty God, whose honour we chiefly seek in this thing." But this was the hypocritical style of that day, which probably deceived nobody then any more than it does now.

Few perpetual foundations were made during the reign of Queen Mary. Even those who left small sums for Masses did it with a great sense of insecurity, as may be seen in the subjoined example. Sir John Byron, of Clayton Hall, near Manchester, knight, the purchaser of Newstead Abbey, and ancestor of Lord

\* See the details in Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, II, 10.

† Dugdale's *Monasticon*, II, 69.

‡ Raines' *History of the Lancashire Chantries*, p. 25.

§ *Ib.*, p. 22.



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Byron, the poet, declares in his will, August 17, 1558, that he "firmly and steadfastly believes every point and article of our faith as the holy Catholic and known Church doth believe and command us, the children and the members of the same, to believe; out of which Church there is no salvation. And I utterly detest and abhor the Manichees, the Arians, the Anabaptists, and the Sacramentarians, and all other heretics, with their damnable sects and opinions, praying and beseeching Almighty God to revoke and call home again all them that have severed and divided themselves from the Catholic Church by their misbelief, that they may be made inheritors of heaven." "I will that an honest priest be hired to sing or say Mass for my soul, etc., within the Parish Church of Colwich, for ten years, with £10 for his yearly stipend. But if the said stipend by any law or laws heretofore made, or hereafter to be revived," (be forbidden) "the said to cease and the same to go to the poor and needy people, and mending and repairing of highways and brigs (bridges), or other charitable deeds."\*

Now what was the effect on the country of the large number of priests engaged in offering up Masses at the various chantry altars? I am far from thinking that their influence—I am speaking of this world alone—was purely beneficial. They were taken from the humbler classes, and in many cases the hope of the small benefice of a chantry priest was the motive of their ordination. They were prepared for the priesthood by no further studies than were just sufficient to enable them to say Mass and office; for very few of them had charge of souls, or were allowed to receive confessions. There was no adequate provision for that moral and religious training that might at least have nourished piety in defect of learning. In fact there was a laxity of discipline in the training of the clergy, and a general freedom of life after ordination that holy men then contemplated with dismay, and which explain in a great measure the deplorable apostasy of the sixteenth century.

Still we must not look on them as mere drones, saying a hurried Mass in the morning and spending the rest of the day in idleness or secular pursuits. The chantry records show that the priests who served the altars had also to assist the parish clergy in the choir; for it must not be forgotten that the psalmody of the Divine Office continued uninterrupted even in the smaller parish churches from their first erection in Saxon times to the Reformation. The law of the English Church was, as Lyndwood declares it, that all chaplains celebrating in churches, whether cathedral, collegiate or parochial, or even in chapels, whether they were parochial chaplains or only chantry priests, could be compelled, in virtue of obedience, to assist at the canonical hours on Sundays, feasts, or any days when the office was sung by note. They were not allowed to recite the office privately while sitting in choir; but were strictly obliged to join in the service, singing the invitatories, hymns, antiphons, responses and graduals, reading the lessons, epistles and gospels, and intoning the psalms.†

By the statutes of many of these foundations the chantry priest was bound to act as village schoolmaster, or master of the town grammar school, or to fill some other useful post.‡ Thus the librarian of the first University Library at Oxford was a chantry priest, and when the famous Lord Mayor Whittington founded a library for the City of London, he appointed a priest to be librarian who should daily say Mass for the founder.§

\* Quoted from *Lancashire MSS.* vol. *Wills*, by Rev. F. Raines in his *History of the Chantries*, p. 14.

† *Provinciale*, p. 70, ed. 1679.

‡ [Some useful evidence of this will be found in the volumes of Mr A. F. Leach, *English Schools at the*

*Reformation*, Lond., 1896, and *History of Warwick School*, Lond., 1906.]

§ At the Reformation the books of this library were sold for waste paper, and the office of the librarian ceased together with the salary.

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The reader who wishes to obtain a more detailed knowledge of chantry founders and their foundations will do well to peruse the volumes of the Rev. Canon Raines, which I have frequently referred to, in which those of Lancashire are elucidated with wonderful research and great learning. It will be necessary, however, to bear in mind that Lancashire was then one of the poorest and least populous of English counties, and that the chantries were very few compared with those in many other parts of the country.

It may be useful to the reader also, whether he be Catholic or Protestant, to spend a few hours in investigating, with the help of such documents, one of the old Catholic churches of England; to decipher the few old Catholic monuments or brasses still remaining, and to contrast them with the Protestant mural tablets within and the gravestones outside the church. As to the latter, if he puts aside those that have been erected within the last forty years, during which there has been a partial return towards Catholic feeling, he will see what has been the *popular* view of life and death among Englishmen during the last three centuries. The general tone of these inscriptions is that of mere paganism; if they sometimes possess what seems a more Christian character, there is nevertheless an entire absence of anything that bears witness to a sense of the holiness of God, the responsibility of man, or to the fact that souls have been summoned to render an account before an awful Tribunal. To say nothing of facetious epitaphs, pompous eulogies, and scraps of empty sentimental verse, even expressions of faith, hope and resignation, and the texts of Scripture only speak of peace, and rest, and bliss, and the bosom of God and the embrace of CHRIST, as if all who were laid beneath the earth had lived the lives and died the deaths of virgins, confessors and martyrs.

To my mind there is something inexpressibly painful, shocking and unchristian in all this. How utterly different is the tone of Catholic epitaphs! If they recount the good deeds of the deceased, and this they do but sparingly, they invariably end with a prayer for mercy: "Cujus animæ propitiatur DEUS;" or, "Orate pro anima." "Pray for the soul: May his soul rest in peace," or, "May God have mercy on his soul."

It was the boast of those who first denied the need of purification after death, and set aside the apostolic practice of prayers and sacrifices for the dead, that the new view would increase both fear and hope. It would, they said, inspire a greater fear in sinners when all chance of being "saved so as by fire" was taken from them. The believer's heart would be filled with greater joy and hope, when convinced that his reward would be immediate and perfect. What a fullness in the Redemption of JESUS CHRIST, that His merits, being applied by faith, should be able to wash the soul of the greatest sinner spotless in a moment!

I will not here contest the matter theoretically. I appeal to our country churchyards to tell what has been the practical effect of the new theology.

Protestants and Catholics were agreed as to the effect of mortal sin unrepented of, or at least unforgiven. They both admitted—at least Protestants did so until lately—that the sinner who dies separated by his own act from God, and without reconciliation obtained through JESUS CHRIST, is separated from God for ever; that there is no further probation after death, whether there be purification or not. Now most certainly neither Catholics nor Protestants, however firmly they may believe in the terrible lot in store for the unpardoned sinner, will willingly think that those who are dear to them have incurred this final separation. They will cast about to see if their faith does not supply



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them with some motive of hope and consolation. I do not blame Protestants that their epitaphs never imply that the soul that once inhabited the cherished clay is burning in the flames of hell. No Catholic epitaph ever expressed such a fear. If it were entertained it could not be expressed. Thus both Catholics and Protestants have recourse to the merits of Him who shed His blood for sinners, in order to find some basis of hope. They may differ in their belief as to the way in which that Redemption is applied not only after death, but also during life; yet it is to both the sole motive of their hope for themselves or for others.

Where then lies the difference? The Protestant, who believes in hell, maintains that for those who escape hell there is no other punishment whatever for sin after death. The most notoriously wicked, those who were utterly careless and impenitent, except at the very last moment, must go triumphantly to heaven, and as directly as the greatest saint. Consequently the popular Protestant opinion, sentiment, or hope, is that *all* go straight to heaven, all die in the LORD, all are in peace, all in glory. Judgement according to a man's works loses practically all meaning. The purity and holiness of GOD are inoperative. And though in theory all is attributed to the Redemption of CHRIST, the common result is indifference to sin, and disregard of GOD's judgement.

The belief of Catholics leads to very different conclusions. They may indeed hope and pray for all, even though the suffrages of the Church are not offered for those who die obstinately impenitent, or who wilfully cut themselves off from her communion. Yet, since the Catholic knows that the soul has to give an account even of an idle word and to pay her debts to the very last farthing, hope and consolation do not turn away the thoughts from a deep consciousness of the holiness of GOD and the grievousness of sin. On the contrary, prayer and sacrifice for the dead, which are acts of confidence, bring before the living in the most touching and effective manner the responsibility of life, the certainty of judgement, and both the dread and gracious attributes of GOD.

The suppression of chantries was not begun with any profession of disbelief in the Holy Mass. It was simply an act of sacrilegious plunder on the part of Henry VIII and of his servile parliament, after the proceeds of the abbeys had been exhausted. The advisers of the child Edward, being partisans of the new opinions, saw how the denial of purgatory as well as of the sacrifice of the Mass would give a colour to their plans of robbery. The vested rights of the chantry priests were respected if only they subscribed the king's supremacy; for they received a pension equal to their average net income.

But the vested rights of the souls in purgatory were not respected, and I conclude this chapter with a history related by Matthew Paris, illustrative of their privation.

"In the year 1161, Bartholomew, a religious man well versed in theological studies, was consecrated Bishop of Exeter. Of this venerable man there is a well-known history related. Intent on gaining souls, Bishop Bartholomew, accompanied by his clerks, made a visitation of his diocese. It chanced that in a certain country town his bedroom looked into the churchyard. About the middle of the night he awoke to recite the night office, and finding the light was extinguished that usually burnt before him, he chid his chamberlain for his negligence, and bade him go quickly and fetch a light. While waiting for his return the bishop heard voices coming from the churchyard as of a great multitude of children, lamenting, 'Alas! who will now pray for us and give us alms, or will celebrate Masses for us?' He was greatly astonished,

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and wondered what this could signify. Meanwhile his chamberlain, not finding a light in the hall or kitchen, went out into the town, but long sought in vain. At last he saw a light in a house quite at the extremity of the town. He hastened thither and entering it found a corpse, the parish priest, and many people of either sex who were weeping and tearing their hair in their grief. But the chamberlain tarried not, he lighted his lantern, and, hurrying back to the bishop, told him what had detained him and how he had at last succeeded. They sang matins together, and when day broke the bishop sent for the priest and some of the townspeople, and inquired carefully of them who was the man lately deceased and what sort of life he had led. They all declared that he had been a just and God-fearing man, the father of orphans, and the consoler of the afflicted, and that he had during his life given all his property to the poor and to strangers. Further, he had at his own expense maintained a priest in his house, who every day said prayers and offered Mass for the holy souls. When the bishop heard this, he at once understood that the voices proceeding from the churchyard were the voices of the souls that bewailed the death of him, through whose charity they had been consoled in their pains. Then the bishop summoned the priest who had used to celebrate Masses for the dead, and gave him a portion in the parish church, enjoining on him to continue the same work of mercy for the rest of his life."

May I express a hope that from our ancient churchyards and desolate churches the cry of the holy souls bereft of the pious foundations of our forefathers may be heard in spirit by many of my readers, and that by prayers and sacrifices they may endeavour to mitigate the loss?



# PART THE THIRD

## THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT

### CHAPTER I. ON RECEIVING COMMUNION

THE words of Walafrid Strabo have been already quoted, that “though the Mass profits those who assist at it without communicating and all” (whether present or not) “who share the faith and devotion of the celebrant and communicants, and though a priest may sometimes celebrate quite alone, yet the legitimate (or perfect) Mass is that at which priest and server, offerer and communicant all assist.” We have then to devote this chapter to Communion among the Anglo-Saxons. We shall consider in what manner they received the Bread of Life, how often, and with what preparation. The history of the Communion of the sick and dying will require to be treated apart.

There are many excellent English words, which, through the change of religion in the sixteenth century, have fallen out of modern language. One of these is the term for Communion. It is known, however, to most by the famous line in Hamlet:

Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,

i.e., without Communion, without preparation (by confession), without extreme unction.

Dr Lingard truly says that “from the arrival of Augustine till the Reformation, the English name for the Eucharist was the housel.” The Anglo-Saxon word *husel*, means offering, oblation, sacrifice. The corresponding word in modern Catholic English is “host,” from *hostia*, a victim, because Communion is participation in the Divine Victim. This word was also used in the fourteenth century:

Bere thy ost anont thy breste  
In a box that ys honeste

(i.e., carry the Host in a decent pyx on thy breast) is the instruction given by John Myrc.\* But the Host when received is called “housel.”

Thou schalt hym soyle  
And geve hym hosul and holy oyle†

(i.e., thou shalt assoil or absolve him, and give him Communion and extreme unction).

In Mr Morris’s *Specimens of Early English*‡ we have the following passages from *Havelok the Dane*:

Hwan he that wiste, rathe he sende  
After prestes fer and hende,  
Chanounes gode and monkes both,  
Him for to wisse and to rede,  
Him for to hoslon and for to shrive  
Hwil his bodi were on live

(i.e., when he knew that, he sent quickly after priests far and near, good canons and monks too, to give him counsel, to housel and shrive him while his body still lived).

The words “communion” and “communicating” from the Latin or French, were beginning to creep into the language just before the Reformation. Brad-

\* *Instructions for Parish Priests*, I, 1961.

† *Ib.* I, 1987.

‡ A p. 40.

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shaw, a monk of Chester who died in 1513, puts into the mouth of St Werburgh the following language:

And I knowledge to Thee with pure intent,  
In Sherethursday afore Thy Passion,  
Thy most blessed Body in sacrament  
Thou gave to us for our communion.

He also employs the word "commund" for "communicated." The old constitutions of the monks and nuns of Isleworth, which are of a still earlier date, omitting the word "housel" altogether, frequently speak of "communings," though, by the struggles of the writer to spell it, it seems that he had not often seen it in writing before. He writes it "comenyng," "comeyng," "comonyng," and "comened," "comenyd," "comyned," "comonyd," with other artificial combinations of *y*, *o*, and *e*, far beyond the usual spelling license of those days.\* But though the new word "communion" was not unknown, the old word "housel" was alone popular before the Reformation, so that the commissioners appointed by Edward VI to value and seize the chantry foundations, in making their returns of the number of communicants in each place, invariably designate them as "houceling people."†

During the whole of the period with which we are now concerned it was the general custom of the Church to administer Communion during Mass to the people under both species. It was, however, often given, under the form of bread only, to the sick, or sometimes of wine only, as to infants; and neither celebrant nor people ever received it under both species on Good Friday, though for many centuries in some places, it was the custom for the faithful, as well as monks and clergy, to communicate on that day. We shall return to this subject in another place.

The learned editors of the *Liber Sacramentorum* of St Gregory the Great say that, although the Eucharist in early times was given into the hands of the communicants, yet before the time of St Gregory the custom was for the priest to place it in the mouth.‡ An old canon mentioned by Regino in the ninth century, but of an earlier period says: "The priest must not place the Eucharist in the hand of any man or woman, but only in the mouth with these words: 'The Body and Blood of our Lord profit thee to the remission of sins and life everlasting.'"§ Yet exceptions seem to have been allowed, at least for a time, since Venerable Bede in describing Cædmon's last Communion says that "while still holding the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, he declared that he died in peace with all men, and so fortifying himself with the heavenly viaticum, prepared for his entry into another life."|| Cædmon, though not a cleric, was a monk, and perhaps on this account a privilege was granted him.¶ It must, however, be admitted that there is no distinct proof that the ancient manner of communicating had ceased to be the general practice in England in the eighth century.

Of course, wherever the custom still subsisted of placing the sacred species in the hand of the communicant, all the precautions were taken that had been prescribed from the earliest times. St Cyril of Jerusalem, who wrote in 347, thus instructs the people how to communicate: "Approaching, therefore, come not

\* Rule of St Saviour, append. to Aungier's *History of Sion and Isleworth*.

† [In two of the earliest sets of Anglo-Saxon "dooms" that have been preserved to us, those of Ine (c. A.D. 690) and of Wihtraed (A.D. 695) a distinction is made between the value of the testimony of a man who is *huslgenga* (a communicant) and a man who is not. See Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angel-*

*sachsen*, Halle, 1903, p. 14, n. 23; p. 97, n. 15 and 19.]

‡ See *Liber Sac.* apud Migne, *P. L.* LXXVIII, p. 883.

§ Apud Rock, 1, 163, *quem vide*; also Chardon, *Histoire des Sacrements*, "Eucharistie," ch. 4, art. 2.

|| *Hist.* iv, 24.

¶ Women, at least in the West, received the Body of our Lord, not, like men, on the hand itself, but on a white linen cloth called *Dominicale*.



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with thy wrists extended, or thy fingers open; but make thy left hand as if a throne for thy right, which is on the eve of receiving the King. And having hallowed thy palm, receive the Body of CHRIST, saying after it, Amen. Then after thou hast with carefulness hallowed thine eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake thereof, giving heed lest thou lose any of it, for what thou lovest is a loss to thee, as it were from one of thy own members. For tell me, if anyone gave thee gold dust, wouldst thou not with all precaution keep it fast, being on thy guard against losing any of it and suffering loss? How much more cautiously, then, wilt thou observe that not a crumb falls from thee of what is more precious than gold and precious stones! Then, after having partaken of the Body of CHRIST, approach also to the cup of His Blood, not stretching forth thine hands, but bending, and saying in the way of worship and reverence, Amen, be thou hallowed by partaking also of the Blood of CHRIST. And while the moisture is still upon thy lips, touching it with thine hands, hallow both thine eyes and brow and the other senses. Then wait for the prayer, and give thanks unto God, who hath accounted thee worthy of so great mysteries.”\*

As regards the Precious Blood we have authentic information from many sources about the manner of its distribution. No more than one chalice was consecrated, and, after a celebrant and the clergy assisting him at the altar had communicated from this, what remained of the Precious Blood was poured into a large chalice,† which was gradually filled up with unconsecrated wine, as the number of communicants required—“because wine even not consecrated, yet mixed with the Blood of the LORD, is altogether sanctified,” says the *Ordo Romanus*. Both the clergy and the people drank from a tube, not from the rim of the chalice. Such tubes were made of gold, silver, ivory, or glass.‡

If a deacon were assisting, it was the deacon, not the priest, who presented the cup to the laity. The Canons of Ælfric, A.D. 970, say: “The deacon is a minister who serves the priest, and places the oblations on the altar, and reads the gospel, baptizes infants, and distributes the Holy Eucharist, serving in white vestments and living a chaste life. A priest without a deacon has the name of a priest, but not the ministry.”§ But though, through the whole period of our Catholic history, there were numerous deacons, subdeacons, and inferior clergy who never aspired to a higher grade, yet there were many of the smaller churches where the priest had none to assist him but his clerk. And in later times a deacon was not allowed to give the Holy Eucharist, except in case of necessity.||

As regards the frequency of Communion, there were the same and perhaps greater extremes then than now. Walafrid Strabo at the beginning of the ninth century makes a review of past times, and gives the customs prevailing in his own day in the church established by St Boniface. “Some,” he says, “thought that they should prepare a whole year for Communion,¶ and these usually received on Thursday in Holy Week. But to others it rightly seemed that men would come all the more unworthily to an annual Communion by as much as they esteemed themselves purified of all weaknesses by long delay; and these

\* St Cyril’s *Catechetical Lectures*, lect. xxiii (Oxford translation).

† The communion chalice was ordinarily a large one with two handles. A few years ago a two-handled chalice of silver, with gold enrichment of exquisite design and workmanship, was found in a field in Ardagh, County Limerick, and is now in the museum of the Irish Academy in Dublin. [This chalice has been figured on p. 19 above.]

‡ See these tubes described and represented in Rock, I, 164. On the filling up of the chalice, *ibid.*, and also the notes on the *Ordo Romanus*, Migne, tom. LXXVIII, p. 882.

§ Wilkins, I, 250.

|| Council of York in 1195, Wilkins, I, 501.

¶ Certainly a euphemistic way of putting it. For “to prepare for a whole year” would mean, in most cases, “to unfit themselves for a whole year.”

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thought that frequent repetition of a holy act would be better, even though the soul be unworthy, since that spiritual medicine both preserves health and cures diseases. Others received only every Sunday, and only on that day said the LORD's Prayer, using the word 'supersubstantial' instead of 'daily.' Gradually the custom came in of receiving daily—at least, some did so. Gennadius neither dared to praise nor blame them. Among the Greeks he who abstained two or three Sundays was excommunicated." Walafrid in making this review does not conceal his own opinion that frequent Communion is more apostolic. But a little further on in the same treatise he shows that the fervour of some had gone to extremes which the Church has since corrected. "There are some," he writes, "who think it enough to communicate once a day, even though they are present at several Masses, while others communicate at as many Masses as they hear; Quorum neutros culpandos existimo."\*

The Church has not had much difficulty in repressing the indiscretions of too frequent communicants, but she has laboured hard and continually, and often to little purpose, to arouse the zeal or remove the mistaken timidity of the opposite class.

When St Theodore was consulted, he replied that among the Greeks the rule was to communicate every Sunday, and he who abstained for three Sundays was excommunicated. Among the Romans those who will, those who do not are not excommunicated.† But of those who were undergoing (public) penance he says:‡ "According to the canons, penitents should not communicate before the end of their penance, but out of mercy we permit it after a year or six months."§ Such were the decisions of one who was chosen by the Pope and sent to England to instruct the young Church of the Anglo-Saxons in Roman practice, and we see from it that the faithful required to be urged on rather than held back.

About a hundred years after the conversion of Northumbria by St Aidan and St Oswald, fervour had so cooled that the practice of frequent Communion among seculars was unknown in that part of England. In the year 734 Venerable Bede, feeling that his end was coming, drew up a long and very earnest appeal to St Egbert, the Archbishop of York, on the state of the Church in the north of England, on its wants and their remedies. On the subject of Holy Communion his language is very striking. He begs the bishop to send preachers to instruct the people by what works they may please God, and from what sins those who wish to please Him must abstain, with what sincerity of heart they should believe in God, with what devotion they should invoke His clemency, how diligently they should defend themselves and all belonging to them from the attacks of unclean spirits by the sign of our LORD's cross, "how profitable (*salutaris*) is the daily reception of our LORD's Body and Blood to every class of Christians, according to the practice which you well know the Church to uphold throughout Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and the whole East." It must not be thought that Venerable Bede was urging the indiscriminate practice of daily Communion. He says that the people must be instructed that there is no *class* of Christians to whom it is not profitable, if the individuals of that class would prepare themselves for it. That this is his meaning is clear both from his appeal to the practice of other countries, and from his own words, for he goes on immediately as follows:—"This kind of piety and devout consecration of oneself to God is so alien to the customs of almost all the laity of our province, on account of the negligence of

\* *De reb. eccl.*, Migne, tom. cxiv, pp. 941, 950.

† Haddan and Stubbs, III, 186.

‡ *Ib.* p. 187.

§ A similar mitigation is found among the judgments of St Willibrord.



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their teachers, and is so perfectly strange to them, that even those among them who appear most religious only venture to communicate in the holy mysteries at Christmas, the Epiphany, and Easter. And yet there are innumerable boys and girls, young men and maidens, old men and women, of most chaste life, who, beyond all doubt and controversy, might be allowed to communicate in the heavenly mysteries every Sunday, and also on the feasts of the apostles and martyrs, as you yourselves have seen them do in the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church. Even the married people, if they would observe the ecclesiastical discipline of continence, might be permitted to do the same, and would indeed gladly do it.”\*

We do not know what fruit this letter produced in the North. In the southern province of Canterbury, three years after its date, a great council assembled at Clovesho, at which, besides the Archbishop, were present the Bishops of London, Rochester, Leicester, Lichfield, Winchester, Sherborne, Dunwich, Worcester, Lindsey, and Selsey. One of the objects of their solicitude was Communion. First the members of monasteries and all ecclesiastics (i.e., the clergy, not priests, and the lay monks and nuns) are warned to keep themselves always fit to receive the Holy Communion of our LORD’s Flesh and Blood, and the superiors are ordered to see carefully that none of their subjects live so unworthily as to deserve to be deprived of Communion, or be indifferent about confession and amendment of life. Should any such be found, they must be sharply corrected. Then, passing to the Communion of the laity, the council says: “Youths of the laity, not yet corrupted by the temptations to which their age is prone,† are to be exhorted often to communicate. Even those who are older, whether unmarried or married, if they cease to sin, are to be admonished frequently to go to Communion, lest they faint for want of that saving food and drink, since our LORD says: ‘Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall have no life remaining in you.’”‡ On the subject of Communion among the Anglo-Saxons a canon is found in Johnson, Wilkins, and Thorpe, and attributed to Archbishop Ælfric, in 994. But as I have observed before, these canons are really by Theodulf of Orleans in the eighth century, and, though translated by Ælfric, there is no proof that they were enacted in England as obligatory. They were, perhaps, merely put out as a good rule to be followed. However this may be, the forty-first Canon enacts that all who are not excommunicated (i.e., I suppose, deprived of Communion while they are performing public penance) shall receive Communion every Sunday in Lent, and also on the three days before Easter, as well as every day of Easter week.”§ I do not find any trace of such a practice as this in English history, and, had it been really introduced by Ælfric, the Council of Ænham in 1009 would scarcely have said simply, “Every Christian must make his confession humbly and diligently; and he must get ready for Communion three times a year.”|| An exactly similar law was enacted under Canute in 1032.¶

To these general rules a few particulars may be added. And first it must be remembered that during several centuries it was the custom throughout the entire Church to give Communion to infants. It was given directly after baptism. St Paulinus has the following lines:

\* *Inter Op. Bedæ*, vol. vi, ed. Giles; also Haddan and Stubbs, III, 314.

† “*Laici pueri qui necdum lascivientis ætatis corruptela sint vitati.*” Perhaps: “Boys too young to have been yet corrupted by the sins of youth.”

‡ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 370.

§ These last words may be otherwise understood,

that the whole of Easter week is to be kept as a holiday like Easter Day itself

|| Spelman, I, 511; Wilkins, I, 285.

¶ Spelman, I, 539; Wilkins, I, 299. Dr Lingard, *A.S.* II, ch. 10, p. 79, in note, says: “St Peter’s festival was a day of general communion.” I suppose he must mean in monasteries.

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Inde parens sacro ducit de fonte sacerdos  
Infantes niveo corpore, corde, habitu;  
Circumdansque rudes sacris altaribus agnos  
Cara salutiferis imbuat ora cibis.

And Rabanus Maurus teaches the same thing in the ninth century.\* Communion was given to infants in the species of wine alone. The priest dipped his finger into the chalice, and then put it in the mouth of the child. This was done not only on the day of baptism, but also for a whole week: "Ye shall housel children when they are baptized, and let them be carried to Mass, that they be houselled all the seven days, whilst they are unwashed,"† i.e., till the removal of the chrismal or linen cap put on after the anointing, which was worn for seven days. When it was removed the head was washed with salt and water.

Either immediately after baptism or while still infants they were confirmed by the bishop, and, according to Archbishop Egbert's Pontifical, were then to receive Communion (*modo communicandi sunt de sacrificio*).‡ How often in England they continue to receive before attaining the age of reason, or whether they did so at all, I have not been able to discover. That they received when still very little children is proved by a canon of St Willibrord: "If any communicate after breaking his fast, let him do penance for seven days on bread and water. But let little children, if they do so, be flogged."§

This canon brings us to the question of preparation for Communion and the dispositions for receiving it worthily. One of these was that it should be received before partaking of any natural food; and the penance for infringing this rule imposed by St Theodore, was the same as St Willibrord's, viz., a rigid fast of seven days. In renewing this prohibition in the tenth century, the canon mentions an exception, which had, however, always been granted, in favour of those who were in dangerous sickness, i.e., a sickness which was thought to be their last. Otherwise the rule regarding fasting admitted no dispensation, however severely it might press on the celebrant or the communicant. It has been said already that the fast of Lent lasted until near sunset. But there was one day on which the fast was still more prolonged, and yet it was the great Communion day. Rabanus Maurus, at the beginning of the ninth century, thus describes the ceremonies of Holy Saturday, or the Vigil of Easter. There was no morning Mass, but as evening drew on (*die inclinante ad vesperam*) began the blessing of the Paschal candle, the long prayers and baptisms. These could not have taken less than three hours. Then, after baptism and the litanies, followed the celebration of Mass and the Communion of the Body and Blood of the LORD. "If anyone abstain from Communion this night, I do not know how I can call him a Christian, except those who are excommunicated for capital crimes, and are doing penance."|| Thus, then, they observed the most rigid fast till, perhaps, eight or nine o'clock in the evening (according to our computation of time), besides the fatigue of the three or four hours of prayer. But it must be remembered that Easter Day began at sunset, so that this late Communion of Holy Saturday was then counted as the Easter Communion. The Easter Day Masses were not sung till after sunrise, and those communicated again who would. By degrees the late Communion of Holy Saturday fell into disuse, and

\* St Paulin. *Ep.* 12 *ad Sever.*; Raban, *De Cler. Inst.* 1, 29, 30.

† Thorpe, II, 392.

‡ The custom of confirming infants continued to the Reformation, but not that of giving them communion.

§ "Parvuli de hoc vapulent."—*Judicium Clementis* (i.e. S. Willibrordi). Haddan and Stubbs, III, 227.

|| *De Cler. Inst.* lib. II, cap. 38. He says nothing about another communion on Easter morning. So St Augustine speaks on Easter Day to those who had been baptized the evening before, and after baptism had received communion: "cujus (i.e. mensæ Dominicæ sacramenti) nocte præterita participes facti estis." (*Serm.* 227.)



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the obligation was transferred to the Sunday morning.\* It would seem that throughout the whole of this period, as now, the time for beginning the fast was counted from midnight.†

With regard to bodily fitness for Holy Communion, I will merely add that one of the decisions of St Theodore was: "Women must receive Communion clothed with a black veil, as St Basil decreed."‡

It is far more important to know what was taught regarding spiritual fitness for participation in the spiritual banquet. It is certain that the morality of a Catholic population will depend on the manner in which men approach this Sacrament, for on that also will depend the fruits they derive from it. Carelessness on the part of the pastors in instructing the people on this subject may lead to either of two contrary extremes. It may be the cause that the people, as Venerable Bede complained—for he laid the blame on the clergy§—while retaining a high reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, will think that frequent Communion is only for the clergy or for monks and nuns, and so will approach it rarely, with the necessary result of loss of grace and



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(From MS. Royal 2. B. VII.)

careless lives. On the other hand, want of proper instruction on its sanctity may lead to careless and indevout frequentation, and even to profanation and sacrilege. We shall find mention of this at a later period, when again the blame was laid on the pastors.

It was the intention of our Divine Redeemer, in leaving us this sacred feast, to place His children in a kind of holy dilemma. Like St Peter, at one moment they are tempted to cry out: "Depart from me, O LORD, for I am a sinful man!" and yet, when asked seriously by our LORD: "Will you also leave Me?" they are obliged to answer, "LORD, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Thus a holy self-love struggles with a holy fear of self, and a holy love of God's goodness with a holy fear of His sanctity, until the soul, under the Church's teaching, arrives at this solution. It learns that though we have a High Priest "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," yet He is also "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world"; and being both Priest and Victim, and offering himself continually

\* I do not find this stated by any liturgical writer, but by this supposition alone can I reconcile the various documents of different dates.

† The ceremonies of Holy Week will be described in a subsequent chapter, so far as they regard the

Blessed Sacrament.

‡ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 203. I pass over purposely certain other questions bearing on this point; they would be out of place in a treatise such as this.

§ "Per incuriam docentium."

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to His eternal Father, "He is able also to save for ever them that come to God by Him, always living to make intercession for us."\* The sinner must then draw near to Him, but does so in order to be cleansed. Being cleansed he must still draw near, and nearer still, for greater purity and in order not to relapse. He draws near to Him as his Redeemer in the sacrament of penance, he draws near again in the sacrament of His Body and Blood. Unless He does this he has no life in Him. If he does it unworthily, he eats and drinks his own judgement, not discerning the Body of the LORD. "Let a man then prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice."† This is the issue of the dilemma. And when both sides of it are earnestly and prudently pressed upon a Christian population—when the holiness of CHRIST, which cannot be exaggerated, is so represented as not to deter the timid, and the mercy of God is so stated as not to encourage the presumptuous—then all that there is of faith and hope and love and fear in the hearts of Christians, prompts them to turn from sin, and fly from themselves to Him who is at once their Redeemer and their God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Happily there were not wanting, at any age of the Anglo-Saxon Church, prelates and priests, like Bede and Egbert, Boniface and Dunstan, on whom rested the spirit of St John the Baptist, the "friend of the Bridegroom." Their hearts leaped for joy within them when they saw the Bride preparing herself for Him. They were so little and so sinful in their own eyes that they deemed themselves unworthy to stoop down and loose the latchet of His shoe. They thought no purity too great for him who has to perform the least ceremony about the altar. Yet being sent before His face to prepare a way for Him, like St John the Baptist, they did not require from the people what they exacted from themselves. Austere to themselves to a degree that fills us with awe when we read of it, they required of the multitude only to flee from the wrath to come, and to bring forth fruits worthy of penance. In proportioning those works they knew the difference between the Publican and the Pharisee, and, like St John, they had their answer for the soldier as well as for the civilian.‡

I cannot enter into details regarding the penitential system of those days. It is enough to say that its life and power was faith in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and the necessity of being in the grace and friendship of God before feeding on His Flesh and Blood. Bread that is put in the mouth of a corpse is wasted. When the Bread of Life is given to a soul dead and separated by sin from God, who is its true Life, that Divine Food is profaned, and the soul is burdened with the guilt of sacrilege. On the other hand, JESUS CHRIST is the Physician of souls, and His Flesh and Blood are the medicine of the feeble and diseased. None of these principles has ever been forgotten in the Church. But as the medical art, though always pursuing the same ends, varies in different ages, according as new diseases appear, or according to the climate and the habits and constitution of the body, so the Church varies her discipline according to the need of souls, often requiring not what is best, but what is possible, and taking heed of the faith and character and circumstances of men. Rabanus Maurus thus states the discipline which St Boniface had brought from England and left to the German Church: "Penance must be public for public sins, and last as long as the bishop appoints, according to the variety of sins, and the absolution must be public, by the bishop or priest delegated

\* Heb. vii, 25, 26.

† I Cor. xi, 28, 29.

‡ Luke iii, 10-14.



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by him. When the crime has been thus public and scandalized the whole Church, the absolution (*manus impositio*) is given before the high altar. But when the sins have been secret and have been revealed by spontaneous confession to the priest only or to the bishop, then the penance should be secret, according to the judgement of the priest or bishop, lest the weak in the Church be scandalized, seeing punishment, but knowing nothing of the cause. The usual time for absolution is Thursday in Holy Week (*Cæna Domini*), but in case of sickness and danger absolution and communion must be given at once. And in general the priest must attend to the confession, penance, and compunction of his penitent, and give him absolution when he has properly satisfied for his sins.”\*

So, too, St Theodore declared: “The Romans reconcile, *i.e.*, absolve, the sinner in the apse. The Greeks do not. The absolution of sinners on Holy Thursday is given by the bishop only, and at the completion of the penance. But if the bishop is hindered, he can delegate power to the priest. But there is no such public reconciliation in this province, because penance is not public here.”† Perhaps public penance was introduced later on, since the form of solemn penance and reconciliation is given in Egbert’s Pontifical and elsewhere. But as the Bishop could on that day be only in his cathedral, this was an exceptional case, and the ordinary administration of the sacrament of penance was by the parish priest. Indeed, the parish was called the shrift-shire.

To induce the faithful to open their hearts in confession, arguments were made use of exactly similar to those which are common at the present day among Catholics. Thus, to take two passages from the sermons of St Boniface. At one time he appeals to fear: “It is better to confess our sins to one man than at the tremendous judgement-day to have them published before the three assemblies of heaven, earth and hell, and to be put to shame for our sins, and that too not for amendment, but for eternal punishment.”‡

At another time the appeal is made to hope: “If anyone falls into any sin, let him quickly rise by confession, and cleanse himself by penance, for the mercy of God is rich in pardon to the penitent if he will turn to the way of justice, as the prophet says: ‘I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.’”§

So two hundred years later, in 1009, when the Danes were overrunning the land, the Council of Ænham exhorted the people to have recourse to penance and Holy Communion: || “Let every Christian, as the most necessary exercise of his faith and Christian profession, frequently go to his confessor, and, laying aside shame, confess his sins and diligently accomplish the satisfaction imposed upon him by the priest. Let him also reverently prepare to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as it may seem necessary to him, but at least three times a year.” Such was the language of councils and of saints. But though confession was, then as now, obligatory on all who had been guilty of grievous sin, it was not strictly required before each communion from those who were leading pious lives. Thus the canons translated by Archbishop Ælfric say: “The people are to be exhorted to prepare themselves for communion by prayer, fasting, alms and good works. It is very dangerous either to receive negligently, or, on the other hand, to abstain from receiving too long. No one should receive without the permission of his confessor and after confession and repentance. There are, however, many monks and widows of so holy and religious a life, that they

\* *De Cler. Inst.* lib. II, cap. 30.

† Haddan and Stubbs, III, 187.

‡ S Bonif. *Sermon* 4, p. 851.

§ *Id.*, *Sermon* 3, p. 849.

|| Can. 20; Wilkins, I, 285.

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may receive every day when they will.”\* Rabanus Maurus makes a similar distinction: “Some say that the Eucharist should be taken every day, unless sin prevents; and they say well, if they receive with devotion and humility and not trusting in their justice and with proud presumption. But if the crimes are such as to remove the soul as of one dead from the altar, penance must be first done.”†

I will here add a few words regarding the practice of confessing venial sins in the earlier ages of the Church. It has been ever taught that sins are not only different in kind, according to their object, and varying indefinitely in degrees of malice, but that they differ fundamentally in their effect on the soul, some bringing immediate spiritual death or separation from God, others inflicting wounds more or less severe, but not immediately fatal, and cooling, though not dissolving, the friendship of God. When our Lord compares one sin to a mote of dust settling in the eye, and another to a great beam of wood, He indicates this enormous difference. But still more plainly, when He bade the sinner to “go and sin no more,” He taught that there are crimes which all men, by the help of the grace offered to them, must and can avoid, whereas it is certain that He never supposed that either those to whom He gave this command, or His own immediate and beloved disciples, were free from all stain of guilt. For such human frailties He provided a daily remedy in His divine prayer: “Forgive us our trespasses”; and especially in the fulfilment of the condition on which we offer that prayer: “As we forgive them that trespass against us.” Our Lord is generally understood to allude to the minor defilements contracted in our course through life, when He said to His Apostle St Peter just before washing his feet: “He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all; for He knew who he was that would betray Him.”‡ By this mystical act performed before the institution of the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood He taught the purity with which we should approach it, not being satisfied with freedom from grievous sins, but seeking even to cleanse ourselves from daily faults.

But the Church has also uniformly taught that whereas the Sacrament of Penance is necessary, where it can be had, for the pardon of grievous sins committed after baptism, lesser sins obtain pardon more easily, and are, therefore, commonly called venial. They might be submitted to the keys of the Church at the devotion of the penitent, but there was no strict obligation of thus seeking their remission. It need not then surprise any to learn that, as the researches of modern scholars seem to have proved, for some centuries the practice of confession of venial sins was by no means so frequent as it now is, even on the part of those who often approached the altar.§

It seems to me that there has been some exaggeration on this subject, and that authors have taken the first mention of a practice, in this as in many cases, as indicating its recent introduction. Yet on the one hand we know that from the ninth to the sixteenth century communion became much less frequent, even among nuns, than it had been previously; and on the other hand we are assured that the practice of confessing venial sins only began to spread, so far as it did spread at all, just about the same period.||

It is not meant that all those who approached Holy Communion only two or three times a year had mortal sins on their souls before they went to their

\* Canon 44; Wilkins, i, 265.

† *De Cler. Inst.* lib. i, 31.

‡ John XIII, 10, 11.

§ [Compare, however, a series of articles on “Confession in England before the Norman Conquest” in *The Tablet*, Feb. and March, 1905.]

|| See St Alphonsus in his *Apology for Frequent Communion* (tom. II, p. 148, Monza ed.) Mabillon, Martene, Alexander Natalis, are all agreed. See a treatise on the subject by Father E. Carpentier, the Bollandist, in *Acta SS.* tom. LVII, p. 720.



# ON RECEIVING COMMUNION

confessors. The testimony of Venerable Bede is very different, and he gives, as a reason for granting them more frequent communion, the purity and innocence of their lives. And in the case of such as those it is certain that they were accustomed to make confession, and did not approach the altar without leave of their confessors. These, then, are cases of confession of merely venial sins. When, however, it is stated that the practice was rare, it is meant that those who went frequently and almost daily to communion were not accustomed to make weekly or fortnightly sacramental confessions. I add the word "sacramental," because Venerable Bede in the eighth century, and Jonas of Orleans in the ninth, while teaching that mortal sins must be confessed to a priest, recommend all Christians to confess their venial sins one to another. This was then done, and is still done, in religious communities, as regards breaches of the rule, in what is called the Chapter of Faults.

Yet it must not be supposed that the practice of frequent devotional confession, at least in monasteries,\* was either unknown or little esteemed. The following history would alone prove the contrary.

St Boniface in a letter gives an account of one who apparently died and was judged and came to life again.† For the purpose for which I quote this testimony it matters nothing whether the death or vision really occurred, since a vision, especially if it is an imagination, must be in harmony with the customs of the day. The man then related that, when his soul passed from his body, he heard himself accused of all the sins committed since his youth, which he had either neglected to confess or forgotten, or had not understood to be sins. Some of these are mentioned, as vainglory, boasting, lies, idle words, obstinacy, and disobedience to spiritual superiors, sluggishness in holy studies, wandering thoughts in or out of church, laziness in getting up, needless journeys, and other similar faults, which he had neglected to confess. It is clear, then, that it was understood by St Boniface, and in general in his time, that such faults were proper matter of confession, and that there was negligence in not confessing them. Besides, on being sent back to life, he is told to confess all those neglected sins to a certain priest. He was also commanded to tell the priest that for many years he had worn an iron circle round his loins for the love of God, and unknown to anyone; by which it is certainly indicated that even to undertake penance, without the approbation of superiors or spiritual directors, was considered to involve an imperfection.

This vision of judgement naturally introduces another phase of our subject, viz., the last communion, made in preparation for death. But I will treat of this in a separate chapter.

[One somewhat striking illustration of the importance attached to Holy Communion by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers may be added to those furnished by Father Bridgett in this chapter. It is perhaps only of recent years that the ceremonial of the various "Judicia DEI" (i.e., Judgements of God) or Trials by Ordeal, has been at all adequately published. But all the known rituals of English origin have recently been printed by Liebermann in his *Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Vol. I, pp. 401-431), showing on the whole a very close dependence upon the continental formularies previously edited by Zeumer (see *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica; Formulæ Merov. et Karol. Ævi*, 1886). In connexion with these it should, in the first place, be noted that the texts now available disprove

\* In 1340, the author of the *Ayenbite of Inwoyt* exhorts both men and women of the world to frequent shrift of their venial sins. He does not treat of com-

munion. (See p. 178, ed. of the E. E. T. Society.)  
† *Op. S. Bonif. Mig. P.L. LXXXIX*, pp. 713-720. [*Mon. Ger. Hist. Epist. Merov. et Kar. E. Dümmler*, I, p. 253.]

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very conclusively an allegation sometimes found in histories of England, and figuring, we regret to say, in the great *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* of Bosworth and Toller, to the effect that the consecrated Host under the name *corsnæd*\* was used as a form of ordeal to try suspected persons, the accused being judged innocent if he ate it freely and without hurt, but guilty if he had a difficulty in swallowing it. The morsel thus eaten was not the Host but a small portion of barley bread or of cheese, which was blessed by a special prayer and sometimes placed upon the altar, but which is in the plainest way distinguished from the Blessed Sacrament. Clerics would seem sometimes to have been allowed to clear themselves upon the Blessed Sacrament (*on husle geladian*, I Cnut, 5, 2a, Liebermann, I, 286), but this is expressly contrasted with the *corsnæd*. No preternatural choking was expected to follow. At the same time it should be noticed that in the ceremonial of the Cold Water ordeal, probably the commonest of the ordeals which were in familiar use, the reception of Holy Communion by the accused person seems to have been the usual preliminary. The procedure was as follows: The accused person or persons were first of all conducted to the church and then Mass was said, at which it was expressly directed that the accused were to make an offering, presumably of bread and wine for the sacrifice. The whole Mass was a "proper" Mass, having introit, collects, epistle and gospel, etc., appropriate to the occasion. After the Pater noster, and consequently at the same point at which the nuptial blessing occurs in a nuptial Mass, there was introduced a special prayer or benedictio making reference to the ordeal to which the accused were to be submitted. At the Communion, before himself receiving the Blessed Sacrament, the priest turned round and adjured the accused, now kneeling at the chancel step, in the following words:

"I adjure you, N, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and by the Christian faith that you have received and by the only Son of God and by the Holy Trinity and by the Holy Gospel and by those holy relics which are in this church and by the baptism with which the priest regenerated you that you do not presume in any wise to communicate or draw nigh to the altar if you did this thing, or were accessory to it or know who did it."

The words, as the nature of the case requires, though drafted in Latin, were spoken in the vernacular, and various Anglo-Saxon versions of this adjuration are printed by Liebermann. If no confession of guilt followed, the priest returned to the altar and after receiving the Blessed Sacrament himself he gave communion to the accused with the words: "May this Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be for your probation to-day." (*Corpus hoc et sanguis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi sit vobis ad probationem hodie*).

After Mass the priest, who, like the accused, remained fasting, went off with them in procession to the pool, the litanies being said or sung upon the way. It is directed that the pool should be some twenty feet square and twelve feet deep. The accused are given water to drink (it is not quite clear whether this is the water of the pool or some holy water previously blessed by the priest) and a series of adjurations are addressed to the waters of the pool, in the course of which allusion is made to the liberation of the Israelites and the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, as well as to the miracle of Eliseus in which he made the iron to float upon the surface of the stream. In each of the prayers the water is bidden, as a creature obedient to its Creator, to reject and cast up the man who is guilty of crime and not to suffer him to be received into its

\*The word *corsnæd* is compounded of *cor* or *cyrr*, a choice, and *snæd*, a bit or piece. It consequently means test morsel.



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depths. Then each accused was stripped of all his clothes save a loincloth, he was given the Gospel and the Cross of CHRIST to kiss, his wrists were tied together behind his knees and he was lowered into the pool by a rope. If he sank he was adjudged innocent and was promptly rescued, but if he floated he was deemed to be guilty and had to undergo the full punishment which belonged to his offence. The other forms of ordeal, notably those by red-hot iron and by boiling water, do not seem, in England, to have been so regularly preceded by Mass and Communion as that which has just been described.]

## CHAPTER II. COMMUNION UNDER ONE KIND

IT is singular how few traces remain in history of the communions of children. Though this was a matter of daily occurrence throughout the whole Catholic Church, yet it is only from a slight allusion here and there that we can gather any information on the subject either in England or in other countries. We have in this one more illustration of the important principle, that what is best known and of most frequent repetition is often least recorded.

We know that in the early centuries and for many ages infants received communion immediately after baptism, and that they often received subsequently before reaching the years of discretion. But we do not know at what date the custom of communicating infants began to be abandoned, nor when it finally ceased in the Church. Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick (1110-1139), says that the priest must give communion to those who have just been baptized.\* The rubric of the baptismal office at the end of an Irish missal of the twelfth century prescribes confirmation immediately after baptism, should a bishop be present, but says nothing about communion.† The *Rede Boke of Darbye* (of the eleventh century) prescribes both, as does also the Sarum Manual. The Pontifical of Bishop Lacy (fourteenth century), in the service for infant baptism, says: "If a bishop be present, the (newly-baptized) must be immediately confirmed, and afterwards communicated, if he has the proper age (*si ejus ætatis est*), with the words: 'The Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST keep thee to life everlasting. Amen.'"‡ But perhaps here the words about the age are a rubric referring only to adults, especially as the communion is given in the species of bread. And, even were it otherwise, the custom of giving communion to infants had long been obsolete, though a scribe copying the ancient ritual would not dare to omit a line of his original. On the whole it seems probable that communion was rarely given to infants after the twelfth century. St Thomas in the thirteenth distinctly treats it as unlawful and unknown in the West. When at last infant communion was no longer practised, we should like to know how children were prepared for their first communion, and at what age it was usual to make it. Both from my own researches, and by inquiry from those best informed in antiquarian lore, I have satisfied myself that a few isolated facts here and there are all that we can glean regarding these interesting subjects.

From the laws of Howel the Good, drawn up in 926, we find that children then confessed in Wales at a very early age: "From every person who has been baptized," says the Code, "the bridaw [i.e., solemn asseveration] may be

\* Usher, *Epist. Hibern.*, p. 77. Migne, tom. CLIX, p. 1001. † Printed by Mr Warren in 1879, from the MS. of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

‡ *Liber Pontif.*, edited by Barnes (1847), p. 256.

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taken, as well man as woman . . . from the child of the age of seven years, which shall go under the hand of the confessor.”\* And again in another law: “At the end of seven years the child is to swear for his acts, and his father is to pay, for then he shall come under the hand of his confessor, and shall take duties upon himself.”†

In Saxon canons we find occasional mention of the measure of penance given to children, and from Venerable Bede we know that in his opinion there were great numbers of boys and girls whose life was so innocent that he wished them to communicate more frequently than was then the custom. But to such mere glimpses into history our vision is limited.

An anonymous author of the twelfth century thus writes: “Give not the LORD’s Body to boys under ten years old, for though they are pure yet they know not what they receive. But if death is imminent, communion may be given them, though they are only nine, or eight, or even seven years old, if they know the ‘Our Father’ and are good.”‡

This passage shows that infant communion was then almost unknown, though opinions differed as to the age of discretion for receiving so great a mystery. Bishop Henry of Susteron, who governed his church from 1240 to 1250, fixes an earlier age. “Let priests admonish their parishioners to teach children from the age of seven and upwards, the Pater noster and the Credo, and on Good Friday bring them with them to the church to kiss the cross, and on Easter Day to receive the Body of CHRIST, having however previously confessed.”

Another synod of about the same date, 1255, prescribes that on Easter Day the Eucharist be *not* given to children (*pueris*), but only the blessed bread.§

The transition from infant communion to that of children prepared by instruction is indicated in the following passage taken from a treatise on the Sacraments, of the twelfth century, sometimes ascribed to Robert Paululus, sometimes to Hugh of St Victor: “If it can be done,” says the writer, “without danger, according to the primitive institution of the Church, the Sacrament of the Eucharist should be given to children under the form of the Precious Blood. Some priests, ignorantly keeping up the form without the reality, give them wine instead of the Blood. I should think this quite unnecessary if it could be given up without offence to the simple. But if in reserving the Blood of CHRIST, or in ministering it to children, there is danger, then indeed the doing so may be rightly omitted.”||

We are brought in these words, by a natural transition, to the question of communion under one species.

It had been thus given exceptionally, from the beginning of the Church, to children generally under the species of wine, to the dying under the species of bread. The doctrine of Concomitance, long a part of Catholic teaching, made it evident that under either species the whole CHRIST, His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, were received.

\* Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, i, p. 273.

† *Ib.* 281.

‡ ‘Nec pueris annos infra bis quinque manentes  
Des corpus Domini; quamvis sint corpore puri,  
Quid sumant tamen ignorant, ergo prohibentur,’  
&c.

See Bened. XIV *De Synodo Dioc.* l. vii, cap. xii, 1–3.

Martene, *De Antiquis Rit.* i, cap. i, 10. Mathoud’s notes to Cardinal Pullen. Migne, t. clxxxvi, p. 1140.

§ Martene, *ibid.*

|| Hugo de S. Victore, *De Officiis Eccl.* l. i, cap. 20.

(In Append.) Migne, tom. clxxvii. In defect of English documents I will give a few words from John Nider, O.P., a great theologian, who took part in the synod of Constance: “The time for communion is when they can sin mortally, discern corporal from spiritual food, and eat this sacrament with the teeth of devotion; in the seventh, eighth, or any other year. And this is to be left to the judgement of a good man, though his decision ought not to be upheld against the statute of a synod or a good custom.” (*Præceptorium Divinum*, Præc. iii, cap. 12.)



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The holding of this doctrine can alone account for the occasional and not infrequent communions under one species in the early Church, and is the only adequate explanation of the gradual change by which the exception became the rule at a later period. Though many reasons are given for withdrawing the chalice, yet they amount to no more than reasons of fitness. They at no time made the distribution of communion to the people in the churches under both species impossible. Such reasons of convenience or precaution would therefore never have prevailed, had not both clergy and laity been thoroughly convinced that the loss of no necessary grace was incurred.\*

By some authors the prevalence in the West of the practice of communion under the species of bread only is dated from the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099, the same use being found already established there.† But, whatever may have been the time or mode of the change, it is incorrect to say that the laity were ever *deprived* of the chalice. If I quote a somewhat singular theologian for this proposition, in such a matter at least he was a competent judge, and his authority has weight. Henry VIII, then, thus replies to Luther's book on the *Captivity of Babylon*, which supposes throughout that the Popes have by violence deprived the Church of her rights. "How can Luther prove," he asks,‡ "that the custom of communicating under one species was brought in against the will of the laity? Most certainly I, who see what things the clergy are unable to obtain from the laity—as, for example, that they are not able to prevent them from burying their dead almost under the very altars—I should not easily believe that the laity would have allowed themselves against their wills, in so great a matter as holy communion, to be deprived of any part of their rights. So that the custom must have come in from reasonable causes approved by the people themselves."

What these reasons were has been stated at great length by Fisher in the book which he wrote in defence of Henry and in answer to Luther's scurrilous reply. He mentions (1) the danger of spilling the Precious Blood when great crowds were communicated; (2) the danger in carrying it to the sick whether on foot or on horseback; (3) the danger to communicants, especially to such as feel disgust at the taste of wine; (4) the danger of scarcity of wine in certain parts of Christendom; (5) and especially the danger to the faithful CHRIST should not be believed present wholly under either species, if they were never received apart. After entering into the controversy with Luther at great length, he thus sums up:§ "Since then the custom of communicating under one species had not its origin in any corruption; since it is a preservative against many dangers; since it is contrary to no precept of the Gospel, but rather authorized by examples related in the Acts of the Apostles and by figures in the old law; since it does wrong to no one, and was not introduced by force, but by the tacit consent of all, and that too in a society governed by the Holy Ghost and in a matter regarding salvation (in which the Holy Ghost could not allow an error); and since it has been solemnly approved by the prelates of the Church—who is so mad as not to see that it is the work of the Holy Ghost?"

Communion under the species of bread only was the general rule in the lesser or parochial churches by the end of the twelfth century.|| But some

\* "Quod sumitur in bina specie nihil abundat ad virtutem vel substantiam supra unam tantum, sed solum ad signum." (Waldensis, *De Euch.* cap.) 92, n. 6.

† Rohrbacher, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. vii, p. 713 (ed. 1868)

‡ *Assertio Septem Sacr.* fol. 14 (ed. 1562).

§ Fisher, *Contra Cap. Bab.* cap. 3.

|| [This is, perhaps, stated a little too absolutely. It would probably be truer to say that Communion under one kind became the general rule before the end

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priests and even bishops had about that time adopted a practice, till then almost unknown in the West, of giving the sacred Host dipped in the Precious Blood. In the treatise on ecclesiastical duties composed by John, brother of Richard, Duke of Normandy, who died Archbishop of Rouen in 1079, it is explained that the celebrating priest receives separately first the Body and then the Blood of our LORD; but that the people for fear of effusion may communicate with the Host dipped in the precious Blood.\* This, however, was a practice attended with almost as much risk as that for which it was substituted, and seemed, moreover, to be founded on, or to lead naturally to, a theological error. It was therefore soon condemned. Pope Paschal II abolished the custom of giving the *Hostia intincta* (dipped Host) which had been followed by Cluny, though he allowed children and the very sick to communicate with the Precious Blood alone.

In England, Cardinal Pullen, writing about the year 1130, warmly denounced the new manner of giving the two species at once, as departing from our LORD's institution without the authority of the Church, to whom alone our LORD has given wisdom to judge what is lawful in so high and delicate a matter. His words are as follows:† “As the Flesh is not without the Blood, nor the Blood without the Flesh, whoever receives either of them thereby receives the other also. The priest then, who when he gives to the communicant the Flesh, first dips It in the Blood—as if the Flesh were without Blood or the Blood existed apart from the Flesh—may indeed possess a right faith, but he certainly does not show that he possesses it.

“Let it then be freely and securely acknowledged, that the one cannot be received without the other. Therefore, if anyone is very sick, and the Blood is poured into his mouth, that he may receive more easily, he has satisfied his obligation of communion.

“Who shall dare to give the Bread thus dipped, when the LORD gave the Bread by Itself, the Chalice by Itself? Who shall join together what the LORD wished to be administered separately? You will say: Why may not I give It thus dipped, without a precedent on the part of CHRIST, when you, without such precedent, do not fear to give one without the other? I reply by the authority of the Church. To prevent accidents she is not accustomed to carry round both, and for the same reason, to avoid effusion, she fears to dip. . . . And yet in many places the Bread thus dipped is distributed in order that, as they say, both may be given after the Gospel model, and at the same time the communion may be made more safely and more quickly. But CHRIST did otherwise, and the authority of Rome strictly forbids His institution to be changed.”

Cardinal Pullen wrote 150 years before the time of St Thomas. We may see then the inaccuracy of Dr Neale in saying that St Thomas lived before the change of discipline, since Pullen speaks of it as the common practice of the Church in his day not to distribute the Precious Blood in the form of wine. More than a hundred years also before that Council of Lambeth in which Bishop Peter Quivil is said by Dr Neale to have made his protest, a provincial council, held at Westminster in 1173, strictly forbade the practice of dipping the sacred Host in the Chalice—a practice which had only origi-

of the thirteenth century than before the end of the twelfth. Even if we regard the action of Bishop Quivil at Exeter in his synodal decree of 1287 as exceptional (see Father Bridgett's full discussion in the first edition of this work, vol. II, pp. 27–32, here omitted, as mainly controversial in character), the synod of Durham in 1220 assumes the retention of

Communion under both species. See Wilkins, *Concilia*, I, 548, and compare Funk, *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen*, I, pp. 306–307; also Smend, *Kelchversagung und Kelchspendung*, 1898.]

\*Migne, tom. CXLVII, p. 37.

†*Lib. Sent.*, VIII, ch. 3; Migne, tom. CLXXXVI, p. 964.



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nated when the Chalice itself was no longer presented: *Non fiat intinctio corporis in sanguine Christi*.\* This is the latest allusion to such a practice, though the giving of the chalice was continued in some dioceses for another century.

It should, however, be well remarked that the distinction was at no time between clergy and laity, but between celebrants and non-celebrants. It was no clerical privilege to receive the chalice. The consecration and reception of both kinds were required for *sacrifice*, but not in the same way for either the significance or efficacy of the *sacrament*. In those days the number of the clergy not priests was immense, yet for the most part they communicated like laymen; and at the present day, when a priest receives communion from the hand of another, it is only under one species.

There is a passage in Leibnitz's *System of Theology* which requires a few words of elucidation, since it might be understood to mean that concessions were made to the aristocracy in England, which, if really granted, would have been contrary to that equality by which all worldly distinctions should be effaced at our Lord's table. "Peter de la Palu," he says, "and William of Mount le Dun, testify that communion in both kinds was retained only in some churches, and that in these great caution was used. Richard Middleton also attests that in his age the chalice was given only to the higher among the people, among whom the danger of spilling was less apprehended, as was also done in the time of Thomas Waldensis—a little before the Council of Constance—who tells us that this privilege was granted to kings, prelates, distinguished persons, and the elders among the people."† As two of the authorities here quoted are English, the examination of them belongs to my subject. It will not, however, be necessary to go beyond Thomas Waldensis, since he has himself quoted Richard Middleton (Richardus de Mediavilla), as teaching the same doctrine as himself. Richard was a learned Franciscan, who died before 1300, and whose writings were well known in medieval England.‡ As to Thomas Netter, or Waldensis, in chapters 87-94 of his treatise on the Eucharist, he discusses the claim which had been lately set up by the Bohemians (A.D. 1412) for the use of the chalice. He first asserts that though Wycliffe did not make this demand, and though the Bohemians, who did make it, were not professed disciples of Wycliffe, yet it was the logical outcome of Wycliffe's teaching. For if the Eucharist is only a figure, then certainly the non-reception of the wine mutilates its purpose, since, by the acknowledgement of all, the Blood of CHRIST is not figured by the Bread, or, as Catholics admit, it is not *sacramentally* present under that species, though it is really and substantially so. But he thinks that the poverty-stricken heretics who rejected the reality and clamoured for the figure, were fulfilling the prophecy of Isaias, when he foretells how in the great distress that shall come upon the world, "there shall be a crying for wine in the streets" (Isa. xxiv, 11).§ He then discusses at great length the ancient and modern discipline of

\* Wilkins, I, 475. See also Giraldus, *Gemma Eccl.* Dist. I, cap. 9. [In the *Real-Encyclopädie f. Protestantische Theologie* (third edition, vol. XII, p. 722) Drews expresses the opinion that this Western practice of giving Communion by intinction had found both its origin and principal development in England. He quotes also a lengthy passage from Ernulphus, bishop of Rochester, who died in 1124, strongly recommending intinction. It was long retained among the Cluniac monks.]

† Leibnitz, *System of Theology*, translation of Very Rev. Dr Russell, p. 120.

‡ Many of them are still in MS. A few were printed at Venice in 1509. (See *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica* pp. 122, 123.)

§ *Doct. Fidei*, tom. II, p. 521. Dr Neale supposes this cry for wine to come from the children of the Church, wiser and holier than their mother, and complaining of her tyranny. Netter more reasonably puts it in the mouth of heretics outside the Church. But even this seems a far-fetched application. The prophet is speaking of the desolation of the world deprived of its wine and mirth.

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the Church, and justifies the change. In summing up, towards the close, he says: "We know that by the custom of the Church it is left to the prudence of the greater prelates to admit to this solemn communion in both species certain of the ministers of the altar or other illustrious people of the laity who may be endowed with faith, reverence, and all fear of God; as the Pope sometimes does and certain other bishops; and also certain prelates of religious orders (admit to both species) some among their brethren. But prelates require great caution to know to whom to grant such a dispensation . . . so that this permission may neither animate them to heresy nor indispose them to faith. Let then these Bohemians who are asking for a new rite, first cleanse themselves from all suspicion of the heresy of Wycliffe about figurative presence. Next let them submit to the Vicar of Christ, the pastor of the whole flock of God, and cease to claim novelties, which the whole Church of God throughout so many regions and nations is content to forego. Otherwise their own claim will refute them. For since they ask that communion under both kinds be given to those only who are free from mortal sin, let them free themselves from the double suspicion of heresy and schism."\*

Such was the language of Waldensis. We can gather from it that a dispensing power was admitted in the prelates. But there is no evidence whatever that it was used in favour of the nobility in general. When Waldensis explains in whose favour an exception may be made, he names kings only as regards rank, and requires virtue, not worldly position, as regards others.† Lyndwood, also in the fifteenth century, gathers from the wording of the Lambeth decree, that perhaps the deacon and subdeacon in a cathedral might still be permitted to receive the chalice, if such were the custom of a church. He does not, however, mention any such custom in England.‡ Nor does there seem to be the least likelihood that a dispensation was ever granted in England to communicate in both species on account of high secular dignity. For had such been the case, the exception would certainly have been granted to the king on his coronation day. Now the *Liber Regalis*, which gives the details of the coronation of Richard II (A.D. 1378), says: "When the king and queen have received the kiss of peace, descending from their thrones they go humbly to the altar to receive the Body and Blood of the LORD from the hand of the archbishop or bishop who celebrates Mass. But when the Body of the LORD has been received by the king, the Abbot of Westminster, or his viceregent for the time, will minister to the king wine to use after the reception of the sacrament, out of the stone chalice kept among the regalia."§ From this it is clear that the king received the Body and Blood under one species only, and then the unconsecrated wine.|| So also in the directions for the coronation of King Henry VII it is said, "While the offertory is in singing, the king crowned shall be led to the high altar, and the cardinal having his face to the choir, as the observance at the offering is, the king shall offer an obley of bread laid upon the paten of St Edward's chalice,

\* *Doct. Fidei*, tom. II, p. 554.

† "Fide fortibus et discretis fidelibus . . . qualiter secundum usum Romanum summus pontifex diaconum et altaris ministros, aut alios fide summos, vel dignitate proventus, puta doctores vel reges, ecclesiæ religiosorum vel magnorum locorum hactenus fratres suos, vel alios tanta re dignos communicare non desinunt." (Cap. 88, n. 5.) "De ministris altaris quosdam, aut alias personas illustres de vulgo, fide, reverentia et omni timore Dei præditas." (Cap. 94, n. 10.) Benedict XIV gives a full account of the concessions made by the Church since the time

of Waldensis. (*De Sacr. Missæ Sacrif.* lib. II, cap. 22, nn. 30-32.)

‡ A custom of that nature lasted in France into the seventeenth century (see Chardon, *Histoire des Sacraments*), and is still in force in Rome as regards the deacon and sub-deacon in the Pontifical Mass.

§ This great stone chalice was supposed to be older than St Edward's days. The *Liber Regalis* is in the care of the Dean of Westminster.

|| The communion of the king is not specially mentioned in Bishop Lacy's Pontifical, though the "Secret" prayer seems to presuppose it.



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with the which obley afterwards consecrated the king shall be houselled ; and he shall offer, in a cruet of gold, wine which he shall use in the said chalice after he is houselled.”\*

In these passages mention is made of wine as being drunk after communion. With a few words on this subject as well as on the blessed bread I will conclude this chapter.

No motive of economy had entered into the change of discipline, for though the consecrated Chalice was reserved for the celebrant, wine was given to all communicants. It will be remembered that from the very earliest ages wine had been mixed with the Precious Blood, according to the multitude of communicants; and that this was absorbed, in many churches at least, by means of a tube. It would seem that many accidents had occurred which led to the abandonment of this practice. The period of this change coincides with that of the relaxation of the more strict penitential discipline. It has therefore been reasonably conjectured that the admission of multitudes on easier terms and with less training to the Easter communion, had led to irreverence, crowding or awkwardness, and to some deplorable mishaps, which made the bishops direct that the Housel should be given only in form of bread. This would cause neither scandal nor surprise to the clergy or laity, because all had been accustomed to see it thus given to the sick, and there are good reasons for thinking that at all times it had been optional on the part of public communicants to receive or not from the chalice.†

It was not with any view of concealing this withdrawal from the laity that a chalice of unconsecrated wine was distributed, for the bishops took special precautions that the people should be instructed that what they received was *not* the Precious Blood, but mere wine for facility of swallowing and honourably cleansing the mouth.‡ This was not merely formally announced by a council, but entered into the regular course of instructions of the village priest, as we learn from the rhymes of John Myrc, who wrote for the poor and unlearned pastors, and bids them:

Teach them then, never the later  
That in the chalice is but wine and water,  
That they receiveth for to drink  
After that holy houseling.  
But teach them all to lere sad (i.e. to believe earnestly),  
That it that is in the altar made (i.e. consecrated),  
It is very God's Blood  
That He shed on the Rood.

In connexion with the changes of discipline another practice may here be mentioned, in which indeed the Norman Church agreed with the Saxon, but in which we differ from both. This was the distribution of the Eulogies, or blessed bread. “As soon as Mass was ended,” says Dr Rock, “a loaf of bread was blessed, and then with a knife, very likely set apart for the purpose, cut into small slices, for distribution among the people, who went up to receive it from the priest, whose hand they kissed. This holy loaf or eulogia was meant to be an emblem of that brotherly love and union which ought always to bind Christians

\* “Device for the Coronation of Henry VII.” (*Rutland Papers*, Camden Soc., 1842, p. 21), quoted by Canon Simmons in *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, p. 238.

† This matter is treated very well by Bulsano in his *Institutiones Theologie Theoreticæ*, vol. v, 266–282; also by Bossuet in two treatises.

‡ Council of Lambeth, 1281, see above, p. 30. Canon Simmons quotes a similar decree of the Prince-Bishop of Augsburg in 1612. (*Lay Folk's Mass Book*, p. 381.)

But he observes that the Germans “were probably as content in their ignorance” as the simple English folk in 1281. In this he seems to me to depart from his usual moderation and candour. What proof is there that either population was contented in ignorance? Surely a decree to obviate ignorance by careful instruction no more proves that the people are indifferent than that the pastors are negligent.

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together; and its use lasted in England up to the woeful change in religion, and still continues to be kept up in France, as well as in the Greek Church.”\*

This was carefully distinguished, even by name, from Holy Communion. “Come neither to loaf nor to housel,” is an expression used in Saxon law.† The custom also existed in the Welsh Church. The time for receiving the compurgation oath is said in an old law to be “between the *Benedicamus* and distributing the blessed bread.”‡

The holy bread was not given to notorious sinners, but Dr Rock can scarcely be right when he says it was not given to “those who were unwilling to participate in the Eucharist.”§ Even if this were the case for a time among the Anglo-Saxons, it was understood differently in France, and at a later period in England also. A council of Nantes of the year 800 says, “When the Mass is over, those who were not prepared to communicate may receive the eulogies every Sunday and feast-day.”|| In an old French sermon of the thirteenth century we read: “Good people, see that you make good confessions and good repentance, and be so prepared to approach our LORD’s table, that you may receive His most holy Body and His Precious Blood, to the salvation of your souls and bodies. But if there is any unhappy man here who will not abandon his sin, I cannot nor ought not to refuse him if he wishes to receive, but I advise him not to receive, but receive the blessed bread instead. But let him well understand that the blessed bread is no use whatever towards the salvation of his soul, but it is so ordered in the Church that we give blessed bread to such people as a cloak to their sins, that when they approach the altar they be not known for what they are.”¶ The author of this sermon and those who adopted this practice were in error as to the meaning of the blessed bread, which was never intended as a simulation of communion by sinners, but as a kind of spiritual communion by devout non-communicants: and the practice of simulating communion was warmly denounced by Beletus, a French writer of the same period.\*\* The blessed bread was not only distributed in the Church, but might be carried home to those absent. Robert de Brunne, after exhorting all to hear Mass on Sundays, recommends those who cannot be present to take no food until they have received the holy bread.

If thou come not, algate I rede (i.e. counsel)  
Eat not ere thou have holy bread;  
For to many things it may avail,  
To soul-help or life’s travail.  
Thy body if thou smartly endes  
It is for housel against the fiendes.  
And holy water take of the priest’s hand,  
For anointing it will thee stand.††

So also the English rule for the Brigittine nuns of Sion says,‡‡ “Also, for (i.e. because) holy water is renewed every Sunday, it is according (i.e. fitting) that thou take no bodily meat till thou have taken holy water and holy bread,

\* *Church of our Fathers*, I, 137.

† “To hlafe ne cume ne to husle.” (Thorpe, II, 151, 160.) The “gehalgodne hlaf” was the blessed bread.

‡ Haddan and Stubbs, I, 257. Mr Haddan says “sacramental bread.” This is a mistake. The *Benedicamus* was said after communion, not before it. The same mistake occurs at p. 638.

§ Dr Rock quotes Egbert’s Penitential or Confessional as given by Thorpe, but which is considered as doubtful by Haddan and Stubbs.

|| Dr Rock himself quotes at p. 135 this canon, which says: “Qui communicare non fuerant parati,

eulogias . . . accipiant.” Mabillon says: “Qui non communicabant eulogias accipiebant, nisi communionis ecclesiasticæ essent exsortes.” (*De Lit. Gallic.* lib. I, p. 53.)

¶ *La Chaire Francaise au Moyen Age*, par M. Lecoy de la Marche, pp. 228, 230.

\*\* *Rationale*, cap. 120. Migne, tom. ccii, p. 125. [It seems probable, as elsewhere noted, and the *Dictionary of National Biography* endorses the view, that John Beletus or Beletus was an Englishman.]

†† *Handlyng Synne*, I, 813 sq.

‡‡ *Rule of St Saviour*, in Appendix to Aungier’s *History of Syon and Isleworth*, p. 338.



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for thereto every Christian man and woman is bound by the law, outtake (i.e. except) comenyng days." The holy bread was sometimes distributed in monasteries at the beginning of dinner.\*

By a constitution of Giles de Bridport, Bishop of Salisbury, A.D. 1256, the parishioners were bound to provide the holy loaf every Sunday.† The householders did this in turn, and in the bede roll a special prayer was asked "for the good man or woman that this day giveth bread to make the holy loaf, and for all those that first began it, and them that longest continue."‡ The bread given in the churches was leavened, but that distributed in the Benedictine refectories to non-communicants was unleavened, according to Dom Mathoud.§

It may be remembered that before the battle of Agincourt the English soldiers all fell on their knees, and plucking a blade or two of grass, or taking a particle of earth, put it to their lips.|| By this action they intended to signify their desire to receive Holy Communion, had it been possible. There is an allusion to this custom in the works of Cardinal Pullen. He has been showing how the Blessed Sacrament was prefigured to the Jews, so that by faith they ate the same spiritual food with ourselves (1 Cor. x, 4). He objects to this: "Then is the vulgar opinion confirmed by this, that those who take the blessed bread on Sunday, or who, being busy elsewhere, eat herbs instead of the Eucharist, have as much benefit as if they received the Eucharist." He replies that these things are not divinely appointed types—that types cannot profit instead of the reality, when the reality is at hand—and that even the divine types of the ancients had no sacramental efficacy but merely aroused faith.¶

I have now to quote a document, painful if we consider the abuses it reveals, but edifying if we consider the energy and zeal which applied a remedy, but, whether painful or edifying, necessary to the knowledge of the whole truth.

Walter Raynolds, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued the following decree A.D. 1325.

"The Great High Priest, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, being about to remove from our sight the glorious Body He had taken from His Virgin Mother, and to place it in the heavens above, on the day of His last supper consecrated for us the sacrament of His Body, that a perpetual Victim, a perfect and singular Host, might be constantly worshipped, by the mystery once for all offered for the Redemption of our souls; and that He might live for ever in our memory, who is ever present by His grace to bring us back to life, to mercy, to salvation and to truth.

\* Abbot Faricius in 1130 gave to Abingdon "vasculum unum in modum patinæ, in quo hostiæ deferuntur in refectorio pro communione sancta." (*Historia de Abingdon*, II, 151.)

† Wilkins, I, 714.

‡ *Church of our Fathers*, II, 367. Also in the York Bidding Prayer: "We shall pray specially for theym that this daye gave brede to this chirche, for to be made holy brede of. For them that it began and lengest upholdes." (See *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 79.)

§ See Migne, *P. L.*, tom. CLXXXVI, p. 960.

|| "A singulis in ore capta terræ particula," says Livius, quoted by Lingard, ad annum 1415. See Bened. XIV. (*De Synodo*, L. VII, cap. 16, I, 2.) He mentions similar customs in Flanders and among the Armenians. M. Léon Gautier, in his notes to the

*Chanson de Roland*, pp. 190–193 (7th ed. Tours, 1880), gives several examples from French romances of this symbolical communion, made at the moment of death, when no priest was at hand, or before battle, by taking three blades of grass, or leaves of a plant or tree, rolling them up, and swallowing them in memory of our Lord and with a desire of Holy Communion.

¶ *Lib. Sent.* (Migne, tom. CLXXXVI, p. 960). Lydgate says that earth was considered to be a "clear token of the humanity of Christ Jesus," no doubt in allusion to the words: "Terra dedit fructum suum," so that in kissing the ground the people intended to honour our Lord's Humanity, in kissing wood, His Cross, stone His Sepulchre, and iron the Nails or Spear. (*Minor Poems*, Percy Soc. p. 60.)

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“If, then, a faithful man should with holy fear consider the magnificence of that Sacred Host which he receives, and with a firm faith admire Its glory, and meditate on the too great condescension of Its obedience even unto death, he would endeavour to prepare his soul to receive it by a purity and sincerity almost beyond the reach of human nature.

“Among all sacrifices, the greatest is the mystical Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. This oblation surpasses every other. It must, therefore, be offered to GOD with a pure conscience, and received with true devotion, and preserved with the utmost reverence.

“But, alas! the sons of feasting and of gluttony, whose God is their belly, long since introduced into the holy Church this abuse,\* that immediately after they have received the LORD’s Body on Easter Day, they have served to them unconsecrated bread and wine, and there sit down eating and drinking as in a tavern—a source of many disorders. Thus, some push forward to receive the Eucharist, that they may get sooner than others to the feasting; or if the clerks are more generous with some, the rest threaten and murmur against them; and, worse than this, some of the simpler sort, misled by the form of bread in what they have first received, and not knowing how to distinguish between material food and that of the soul, which is the Body of CHRIST, fall into dangerous errors against faith, as we have too much reason to fear.

“Alas! in a contest for a perishable crown, men abstain from all things; while seeking the unfading crown of glory, they will not endure one hour’s abstinence, but without an interval defile the Body of CHRIST by gluttony, and, as far as in them lies, drown it amid bodily food. Hence, since we are bid to avoid not only evil, but every appearance of evil, we hereby command all rectors, vicars and parochial priests, and other ministers in the churches, under pain of the greater excommunication, which will be incurred by the disobedient, that they prohibit for the future that, after the parishioners have received the Body of CHRIST according to the Catholic rite, oblation of bread or wine should be given to any of them according to the old custom, which we absolutely condemn as an abuse; and this, however impudently anyone may demand them. When the solemnity of the communion is over, and they have satisfied their devotion and prayers, and gone home, let the doors of GOD’s house be shut, which delights only to receive guests for spiritual banquets.

“No one ought to think this decree a hard one. The old discipline prescribed that he who had received the Body of CHRIST early in the morning should fast till nine; and he who had received at nine or ten, till vespers; therefore modern Christians ought to think it an easy ordinance to abstain only so long as from the time of their communion till they reach home.”†

It may seem to some who read this decree that the men guilty of such conduct could not have had faith in the Real Presence. No doubt, they did not discern the LORD’s Body as it should be discerned, with their moral faculties. But it would be most unphilosophical to conclude against a man’s faith from the extravagant inconsistency of his conduct. Do none of those who sin believe in the omnipresence of GOD? Or, to take a case directly in point, where scurrilous games are carried on at the wake of a corpse, does the misguided company not believe in death or judgement?

A council held in London in 1342, abolishing this very abuse of “wakes of the

\*The custom, however, is praised by a writer of the twelfth century, who attributes it to St Benedict. See John Beletus, *Rationale Div. Off.* cap. 119: “De parvo prandiolo.” Migne, tom. ccii, p. 122.

† Wilkins, tom. 11, p. 528.



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dead," remarks how many things begun piously gradually degenerate. Thus, nights devoted to prayer for the deceased, while his body is still unburied, had by degrees come to be spent in buffooneries, drinking and impurity.\*

So had the custom of sharing in the oblations—an imitation of the apostolic love-feasts—ended at last in intemperance.

Whether the scandal so vigorously repressed by the archbishop had spread into other parts of England, or much infected his own diocese, does not appear. But the very possibility of such abuses will explain the precaution taken by the Church in withdrawing the consecrated chalice.

Protestant writers have often reproached the Church for mutilating one of the sacraments. It would be answer enough to such men to say that, if the Church refuses the species of wine to all but the celebrant, she deprives none of her children of either the Body or Blood of the LORD. Protestantism has deprived them of both, and only gives them the unchanged bread and wine, which used to be the supplement or complement of Holy Communion.

## CHAPTER III. COMMUNION FOR THE DYING

THE communion made in immediate preparation for death was called in Latin *Viaticum*, in Anglo-Saxon *Weg-nest*, both words signifying provision for a journey. In describing the death of the holy widow Elgiva, Osbern says that she begged St Dunstan to say Mass in her room, that she might receive the Body and Blood of CHRIST, that so, "being fortified by those life-giving mysteries, she might not be ashamed when she should speak with her enemies in the gate."† These words of the Psalmist thus applied, either by Elgiva or by Osbern, to the holy viaticum very happily express the belief of Christians that nothing can better strengthen us for the dread encounter with our spiritual foes than to have just received devoutly the Body and Blood of Him who conquered them and redeemed us from their slavery. So, too, nothing can give us greater confidence to meet our LORD Himself in His Majesty than to have humbly and faithfully welcomed Him in His hidden mystery. It is in these last moments of life that the sincerity and reality of faith are tested, and it often appears, by the unmistakable love then expressed, what hidden treasures of grace have been accumulated during the unrecorded communions of many years.

A few examples of beautiful deaths shall here be related as specimens of the millions which have found no historians and which are reserved for revelation in eternity. To understand these better we should know what were the regulations of the Church on the subject of viaticum.

During the Anglo-Saxon period it was allowed to celebrate Mass in the chamber of the dying person, and thus to communicate him directly from the altar. St Dunstan said Mass near the bedside of Elgiva, and he also received his last communion when Mass was being offered by his death-bed.‡ But to offer Mass the priest must of necessity be fasting, and he was often called to administer the dying when he had broken his fast, or when for various reasons he could not celebrate the Holy Sacrifice near to the sick person. In such cases the Blessed Sacrament was brought from the church where it was always reserved for

\* Wilkins, II, 706.

(Rolls Series). The words employed by Osbern are

† See Osbern's *Life of St Dunstan*, *Acta SS.* tom. XVI, from Ps. CXXVI, 5

349; also *Memorials of St Dunstan*, pp. 20 and 88

‡ See p. 112.

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this very purpose. Missionaries travelling far from any church were ordered carefully and reverently to carry with them the Blessed Eucharist in readiness for the dying.

The Pontifical, commonly called Leofric's Missal, gives the following directions for administering the viaticum: "As soon as they see that the sick person is coming to his end, the holy housel must be administered to him, even if he has eaten that same day; for communion will be his defence and help in the resurrection of the just, and will itself raise him up. After he has received communion, the Passion of our LORD will be read to him by priests or deacons till his death."

Priests were very strictly commanded by various councils to take care that no one died without the viaticum of our LORD's Body.\* It is called by St Boniface "the last and *necessary* viaticum"; and that great prelate commanded that it should be given to one insensible who might have expressed a desire of it before: "If a penitent being sick ask penitence, and when the priest arrives has lost his speech or is out of his mind, let those who were present testify to his desire; and if he is thought very near death, let him be absolved by imposition of hands, and the Eucharist poured into his mouth." In this case a small particle of the sacred Host was put into some wine, and thus he was made to swallow it, or, if it could be done conveniently, he might be communicated with the species of wine only. But in spite of the great authority of St Boniface the practice of administering those who were insensible was rightly discountenanced as somewhat inconsistent with the nature of this sacrament. The thirty-first of Ælfric's canons says: "They will give the housel to the sick if they are able to swallow, but not to a man who is half dead, for CHRIST meant that men should *eat it as food*."

There is reason to fear that, in spite of the protest of the canons in favour of a contrary practice, viaticum was not usually granted to criminals condemned to death, from an opinion that it would be irreverent to our LORD to hang a man who had just received His sacred Body. And yet the hope was not rejected that one who was by his crimes considered unfit to live longer on earth might by true penance live eternally in heaven. Among the laws of Edward the Elder (A.D. 905), one is that criminals condemned to death may always have a confessor;† but nothing is said regarding communion. Mere silence would of course be no proof that communion was refused; but Giraldus in the twelfth century complained that by a great abuse the practice was to deny both the Holy Eucharist and ecclesiastical burial to those who had been hanged.‡

No such prejudice existed against giving holy communion to soldiers about to fight. The Peterborough Chronicler relates how the patriot ealdorman, Algar, during the invasion of Lincolnshire by the nothern pirates in 870, gathered a small band of brave men to resist them, and how they spent the night in prayer, confessing and receiving Holy Communion, which, from their small numbers, they expected would be their viaticum. And so the event too truly proved.§

It is only in a case where death is expected from sickness, not when life is in danger from accident or violence, that the sacrament of extreme unction can be administered. With regard to the sacrament all that need here be said is that the order of precedence has somewhat varied in different ages. Since about the thirteenth century it has been the rule that the viaticum should be given before the sacrament of extreme unction, unless there is some

\* 65th Canon of St Dunstan.

§ Printed in Dugdale, i, 68. "Sumpto sacro viatico"

† Wilkins, i, 203.

‡ *Gemma Eccl.* dist. i, cap. 40. are the words.



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reason to the contrary. Before that time extreme unction was generally given first.\*

Dr Rock has, I think, been wanting in his wonted accuracy when he says that "the sick person received extreme unction once only in every illness, but the Holy Eucharist every day till he died."† He refers to the *Concordia* of St Dunstan, which lays down the rule for monks, and it is not improbable that a dying monk often did receive viaticum daily. But this could not be the case with the majority of Christians. There was no prohibition, however, against repeating the viaticum.

In monasteries in St Dunstan's time the holy viaticum was brought daily after tierce by the priest who had celebrated the conventual Mass. Taking off his chasuble, he carried the Eucharist to the sick. His assistants preceded him with lights and incense, the whole community following, singing psalms, litanies and prayers. Bede has described many beautiful deaths of monks and nuns, and, though he is not explicit on the subject, it would seem that viaticum was received but once, and generally deferred until the near approach of death.

It is certain that viaticum might be lawfully administered under either species or under both. The mention by an author of the Body and Blood is no proof that the Eucharist was given under both species, since it was most certainly believed that our LORD's Body and Blood, united to His soul and Divinity, were received by him who participated in either species. St Cuthbert, a few hours before his death, was carried into the oratory of his hermitage in the island of Farne and placed near the altar. His prose life says "he prepared for death by the communion of our LORD's Body and Blood"; the metrical life, that "reclining near the altar he tasted the draught of life and prepared for his journey upwards with the Blood of CHRIST." Dr Bright says: "It is certain that he received communion in both kinds, and clearly not during Mass . . . both kinds being kept ready on the altar." This may have been so, but to me it is quite uncertain. Midnight had just passed, and it is not improbable that the abbot who administered the dying bishop waited till that hour to say Mass, since there was an altar. And in any case the words of Bede's metrical life make it probable that he received the precious Blood only, a few drops being poured into his mouth. The expression of the prose life that he received the Body and Blood proves nothing, since Bede distinctly says of a little boy that he received *Viaticum corporis et sanguinis Dominici*, and yet that he only received *Dominicæ oblationis particulam*. Dr Bright, with his usual candour, admits that, in certain cases the chalice was not reserved.‡

Death comes at all hours, and the viaticum could be received at all hours. St Hilda, whose death is described by Bede, received viaticum about cock-crowing;§ Cædmon, just after midnight.|| St Bennet Biscop dies during the night: "A priest reads the Gospel to him, as had been done on other nights (for he was sleepless); the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the LORD is given to him as viaticum when his death draws near, and amidst the prayers and psalms of his brethren he breathes out his soul."¶

How gladly we should have learned the devotion which he who wrote these things himself manifested to the Divine Viaticum when his own hour

\* See Mabillon's notes to the *Ordo Romanus*, Migne, tom. LXXVIII, p. 928.

† *Church of our Fathers*, II, 454.

‡ *Chapters of Early English Church History*, pp. 344 and 278. The cases that Dr Bright refers to are those

of Cædmon and of the little boy. See the story of this child's death at p. 29 of the present work, or in Bede, IV, 14.

§ IV, 23.

|| IV, 24.

¶ Bede, *Vita quinque Abbatum*, lib. II.

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came! But though we have one of the most simple and charming descriptions that has, perhaps, ever been penned of his last days, the monk, who wrote hurriedly, as he says, for his brother monk, has not mentioned the circumstances of Bede's reception of the sacraments. This is a curious warning how cautious we should be in drawing conclusions by mere negative arguments. Silence like this in earlier centuries would often be taken as conclusive proof that viaticum and extreme unction were then unknown. It would be said that the Saint died after long and calm preparation, in full possession of his senses; and that a constant watcher by his bedside has described every minute detail of those days, and yet has said nothing whatever of the sacraments. Could it be then, it would be asked triumphantly, that they were known in his time? But I suppose no one will be bold enough to argue thus about Bede, who has described so many death-beds, and whose works are so full of proofs of his love and adoration for the Divine Sacrament, and whose most earnest request in dying was that his brother priests "would celebrate Masses and pray diligently for him." A few passages, however, from this description will show how sweetly they can die who with a lively faith in the cleansing pains of purgatory—and in this faith Bede has hardly been surpassed—unite an equally lively faith in the power of the viaticum here and holy Masses after death.

"About a fortnight before Easter he was reduced to a state of great weakness, with difficulty of breathing but without much pain, and in this condition he lasted till the day of our LORD's Ascension (May 26). This time he passed cheerfully and joyfully, giving thanks to GOD both by day and by night, or rather at all hours of the day and night. . . . I can declare with truth that I never saw with my eyes nor heard with my ears, of any man who was so indefatigable in giving thanks to the living GOD. He chanted the passage, 'It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD,' warning us to throw off all torpor of soul, in consideration of our last hour. . . . He also chanted the antiphon, 'O King of Glory, LORD of Hosts, who on this day didst ascend in triumph above all the heavens, leave us not orphans, but send us the spirit of truth, the promised of the Father, Alleluia.' When he came to the words, 'leave us not orphans,' he burst into tears and wept much; and after a time he resumed where he had broken off, and we who heard him wept with him." . . . (He dictated to his scholars to the last, and sent, as has been said, for the priests, and made them promise to say Masses and pray for him after death.) "When they heard him say that they would see him no more in this world, all burst into tears, but their tears were tempered with joy when he said: 'It is time that I return to Him who made me out of nothing. I have lived long, and kindly hath my merciful Judge forecast the course of my life for me. The time of my dissolution is at hand. I wish to be released, and to be with CHRIST.' In this way he continued to speak cheerfully till sunset, when the forementioned youth said: 'Beloved master, there is still one sentence unwritten.' 'Then write quickly,' said Beda. In a few minutes the youth said: 'It is finished.' 'Thou hast spoken truly,' replied Beda; 'take my head between thy hands, for it is my delight to sit opposite to that holy place in which I used to pray; let me sit and invoke my Father.' Sitting thus on the pavement of his cell, and repeating 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,'—as he finished the word 'Ghost,' he breathed his last, and took his departure for heaven."



## COMMUNION FOR THE DYING

In spite of this conviction on the part of the narrator, he expresses his great satisfaction at the beginning of his letter at the news his correspondent had sent him, "that Masses and holy prayers are diligently performed for Bede, the beloved of God," in the monastery where he was dwelling. Confidence in God's mercy made Bede anxious that every means should be taken to implore that mercy for himself, and confidence in Bede's holiness did not prevent his friends from obeying his request.\*

To these deaths of holy monks I will add one of a pious layman. Æthelwine, ealdorman of the East Angles, is known in history as the "friend of God."† He was the great protector of the monks after the death of King Edgar. He had been for many years the most intimate friend of St Oswald, archbishop of York, and had founded the abbey of Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, and watched over its growth in union with that prelate. St Oswald died at Worcester in 992, in the very act of washing the feet of the poor. When the news reached Ramsey, Æthelwine was there with his two sons, but, after taking part with many tears in the solemn prayers that were offered for the soul of his holy friend, he never smiled again. Nor did he long survive him. One Sunday, feeling, from his sufferings, that his end was drawing near, he made his confession, was anointed and received Holy Communion from the hands of St Elphege, Bishop of Winchester, and Germanus, abbot of Winchelcombe, in Gloucestershire. Afterwards he begged that the monks who were there might come to his bedside and solace him by singing the Psalms which he knew. He tried to join with them; when they sang 'Laudate DOMINUM in cymbalis,' he added, 'omnis spiritus laudet DOMINUM' (let every soul praise the LORD), and repeated the words three times; then making the sign of the cross with his right hand, with his left he closed his eyelids, and so passed away.‡

To complete this subject I must say a few words about the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. From the faith of the Catholic Church that the presence of our Divine LORD is due to the words of consecration, when pronounced by a priest with due intention, and not to the faith of celebrant or recipient, it follows that that Presence is permanent as long as the sacred species remain incorrupt. When, through the action of physical causes, they cease to possess the qualities of bread and wine, and therefore cease to be the signs chosen by our LORD, His substantial Presence ceases also. Hence two duties are imposed on the priests to whom our LORD has committed this sacred deposit. They must preserve it carefully and reverently, and they must take care not to keep it too long, or in such a manner that the sacred species would corrupt. On these points we have several regulations of Anglo-Saxon prelates.

The Venerable Bede in his genuine Penitential declares that priests, "when they go among the people far from a church, should take the Holy Eucharist with them."§ One of the decrees of St Boniface was that "no priest should be on a journey without the holy chrism and blessed oil and the Sacred Eucharist, so that, wherever he may chance to be wanted, he may be found ready at once for his functions."|| It is certain that, when the Eucharist was thus carried on journeys, it was under the species of bread alone.

The priest was also commanded to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in his

\* Cuthbert's letter is printed with Bede's works by Stevenson, Giles, Migne, and others. I have followed Dr Lingard's translation.

† Freeman's *Old English History*, p. 182.

‡ *Vita S. Oswaldi*, p. 474, in *Historians of York* (Rolls Series, 1879).

§ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 329. [Although this Penitential is accepted as Bede's by Haddan and Stubbs, and also by Wasserschleben, it is probably not his genuine work. See Plummer, I, 157. But it is not much later than his time.]

|| *Ubi supra*, p. 821

# THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT

own church, in case it should be wanted suddenly by the dying, since this frequently happened when he was not fasting and therefore could not say Mass.\*

The place and manner of reservation varied in the early ages. Sometimes it was the sacristy, sometimes the high altar, sometimes the baptistery, sometimes the monastic infirmary; and on a journey the priest would carry it suspended round his neck, or deposit it wherever it could be placed with safety and reverence.

It appears from the *Ordines Romani* that from a very early age the custom was observed of reserving a particle of the sacred Host consecrated by the Pope or by a bishop. This was afterwards carried to the sacristy and there reserved until the next celebration, when it was solemnly carried before the Pontiff and placed upon the altar. He consumed this particle at his communion, and replaced it by another. But from the second Ordo we learn that sometimes the place of reservation for this particle was not the sacristy, but the altar.† Both these customs appear to have been followed in England. Hence *husel-porric* or Sacrament-porch is one of the Anglo-Saxon names for the sacristy. When the place chosen for reservation was the altar, the blessed Sacrament was generally suspended under the stone canopy or ciborium which was built over the high altar.‡

On the Continent at least, there are instances of an ark or chest for reception of the Holy Eucharist having been constructed under the altar table.

We have seen the penalty inflicted on Irish and British priests for carelessness in carrying the Divine Deposit. Similar penalties were appointed by St Egbert—for allowing a particle to fall to the ground, a day's fast; but for losing it, either forty days, or three forties, or a whole year, according to the degree of negligence.§ St Theodore had already made similar decisions. St Oswald of York|| imposed a series of fines for this and other negligences, the proceeds of which were applied to pious works.¶

If the Blessed Sacrament were ever reserved too long so as to corrupt, it was to be burnt, and the ashes placed under the altar; but a penance was imposed of from twenty to forty days on the careless priest.\*\*

From an epistle of Abbot Ælfric to Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, in 1003, it appears that some priests were accustomed to reserve for the sick, during a whole year, particles consecrated on Easter Day. This custom was reproved as a superstition and an abuse, and they were ordered to renew the sacrament every seven days or fortnight.†† It is curious that some Protestant writers‡‡ should be able to see in such facts as these arguments against the Real Presence, and even against the faith in the Real Presence of the Anglo-Saxons. The very superstition last named came from an unenlightened reverence, as if what was consecrated on Easter Day had a special virtue;

\* Thorpe, II, 252.

† See Mabillon's notes on the *Liber Sacram.* Migne, tom. LXXVIII, p. 933.

‡ [It is to be regretted that Father Bridgett has not stated more fully the grounds upon which he bases this opinion. No doubt in the twelfth and subsequent centuries, suspension was the method most commonly adopted in England for reserving the Blessed Sacrament, but can we safely assume that this was the case in Anglo-Saxon times?]

§ Haddan and Stubbs, III, 417. || Spelman, I, 495.

¶ Concil. Ænham. can. 31; Spelman, I, 511; Wilkins, I, 285. Even when fines were inflicted by secular magistrates for sins against God, in the place of,

or in addition to, spiritual penalties, they were left to the disposal of the bishop, who, however, might not apply them to any secular purpose, but, as the canon states, "for prayers, the relief of the poor, reparation of churches, the instruction of the people, the purchase of books and vestments, and other pious uses."

\*\* St Theodore's Penit.; St Egbert's Penit.; St Dunstan's Canons (the 38th).

†† Canons of Archbishop Ælfric, Thorpe II, 361.

‡‡ Foxe (*Book of Martyrs*, v, 277) quotes Abbot Ælfric's Epistle against these abuses as if it were a proof against the Real Presence. It is hard to see whether he relies on the abuses themselves or on their correction.



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but even when abuses proceed from irreverence, surely carelessness and disbelief are two very different things—unless indeed we are prepared to maintain that every one who forgets God's presence is an atheist, or every one who neglects to prepare for death is convinced that he will never die!

The vessel in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept—sometimes called repositorium, sometimes the chrismal, sometimes the eucharistial, sometimes known by other names\*—had a special blessing, which by its wording expresses the faith of those who used it. It was called “the new sepulchre of the Body of CHRIST” (*corporis Christi novum sepulchrum*),† and we have already heard Venerable Bede teaching that the sepulchre that contains the living and risen Body of CHRIST is deserving of more reverence than that which only once contained His dead Body. The Anglo-Saxons gave by word, by sign and by acts, the highest worship to that which the eucharistial contained. They called it “adoranda FILII DEI Hostia”—the adorable Host.‡ They gave every sign of outward reverence to the church that contained it, and the altar on which it was offered. Hence, too, they loved to pray in the church and before the altars, not merely during public devotions, but when the church was empty. Of this innumerable examples occur in history and in the lives of the saints. Asser tells us of the great King Alfred that not only he used daily to hear Mass and to recite the day and night hours, but also in the night-time he would go to the churches secretly to pray (*ecclesias nocturno tempore, orandi causa, clam a suis adire solebat*). The same author tells us how Abbot John was murdered while absorbed in prayer before the altar during the night. The nocturnal visits of St Wulstan to the altar are also commemorated by his biographer.



EUCCHARISTIC DOVE

The authors who relate these things do not indeed expressly say that it was the presence of our Blessed LORD in His Sacrament which thus attracted them. They were not writing for the refutation of sceptics nor for the information of hesitating Protestants. But that with them “to pray before the altar” meant what the same expression means when used by modern Catholics,

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\* Alexander Neckham, writing about 1180 a vocabulary for scholars, calls the pyx *filitorium*, if Mr Wright has read his MS. correctly: “*filitorium in quo conservetur dignissime eucharistia, salus animæ fidelium, quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse non poterit.*” (*Library of National Antiquities*, 1, 119.) This should probably

be *phylacterium*.

† Martene, *De Eccl. Rit.* l. 11, c. 13; Gage, *Ordo ad Ded. Eccl. in Archæol.* vol. xv. The same prayer is in Leofric's Missal.

‡ “*Super illud (altare) adorandam Filii sui hostiam ipse benedicat impositam.*” (English Pontif. Martene, *ubi supra*.)

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results from all that has hitherto been said about their faith, and the innumerable testimonies that remain as to their devotion to our LORD at Holy Mass and in Holy Communion.\* When Holy Scripture tells us how Anna, the mother of Samuel, prayed before the tabernacle, it is not expressly said that she was thinking of that mysterious Presence between the cherubim called the Shechinah; yet when we know of that Presence, and know how it was sometimes explicitly invoked, as by Ezechias,† it would be utterly unreasonable to doubt that it was the same faith and devotion which moved the heart of Anna. And the same argument holds good of the Christian Shechinah.

It will not be out of place here to add a few words with regard to the ceremonial which was prescribed when the Sacred Host was carried from the church to the sick, and which was exactly similar to what may still be witnessed in many Catholic countries. In the year 1195 Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury and Legate, celebrated a council at York, in which he decreed: "When Communion is to be given to the sick, the priest must himself, in clerical habit befitting so great a sacrament, carry the Host, with a light borne before him, unless the inclemency of the ways or other good reason prevent it."‡ He renewed the same injunctions in a Synod of the province of Canterbury held at Westminster in 1200.§ A similar decree was promulgated in most of the Synods held throughout England and Wales in the thirteenth century. Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, commands the priest to wear a fitting dress, and to carry to the house of the sick man and back again publicly and honourably the sacred pyx, holding it before his breast resting on a clean veil. A light must go before It, since the Host is "the brightness of eternal light" (Wisdom vii, 26), and in order that thereby the faith and devotion of beholders may be increased; as it had been ordered in the General Council.||

Giraldus notices that the stole was to be laid crosswise over the pyx.¶ He is writing for the Welsh priests at the end of the twelfth century.

In 1220 Richard Marsh, Bishop of Durham, gave a very full instruction on

\* [There seems to be somewhat more difficulty than would be readily inferred from Father Bridgett's language in this passage. On the one hand it is undisputed that in the Greek and most of the other Oriental churches to this day no extra-liturgical cultus of the Blessed Sacrament is practised. The Greeks believe in the Real Presence and they reserve the Blessed Eucharist with all honour upon the altar in the Sanctuary, but they do not genuflect to It or come to visit It, or pray especially before It. It seems, therefore, intrinsically possible that a similar state of feeling *may* have prevailed in Western Europe during the early centuries. Again, while we may readily believe that chroniclers when speaking of prayers in a church would not, as a rule, think it necessary to mention explicitly that a saint or a religious went there to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, still it is also possible that such persons may have preferred to pray in the church because it was the place specially consecrated for the worship of God, because it was the place in which Christ our Lord was habitually offered up in the holy sacrifice of the Mass and because a great rood was generally found there. For these and similar reasons they might equally wish to pray in the church even if the Blessed Sacrament were not reserved. The strange thing is that in all the Christian literature of the first thousand years no one has apparently yet found a single clear and definite statement that any person visited a church in order

to pray before the Body of Christ which was kept upon the altar; while, on the other hand, we do begin to find such statements by degrees more and more explicitly made from the twelfth and thirteenth century onwards. Almost equally remarkable is the fact that no one seems to have yet been able to quote a prayer addressed to the Blessed Sacrament (apart from prayers intended for the time of Communion) composed in the same early centuries. Many collections of private devotions exist—"the Book of Cerne" might be cited as a well-known English example, dating from before the time of Alcuin—but the only Eucharistic prayers which are known to us are those that occur in the liturgy of the Mass. Of course it is always possible that more careful investigation may result in the discovery of some unequivocal early example of devotions paid to the Blessed Sacrament reserved, but we can hardly ignore the fact that such earnest and independent inquirers as Father Bridgett in this country, the Abbé Corblet in his *Histoire du Sacrement de l'Eucharistie*, and Pfarrer Raible in his *Das Tabernakel einst und Jetzt* (Herder, 1908), have apparently not succeeded in finding any testimony which is really satisfactory.]

† 4 Kings xix, 14-16.

‡ Wilkins, *Concilia*, i, 501.

§ *Ib.* 505.

|| *Epistola* 52 (Rolls ed.)

¶ *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, Dist. i, cap. 6 (Rolls ed.)



# COMMUNION FOR THE DYING

all points concerning the Blessed Sacrament: "When the Eucharist is taken to the sick," he says, "let the priest have a clean and decent pyx, so that one always remains in the church, and in the other he carries the LORD'S Body to the sick, the Eucharist itself being enclosed in a very clean purse. The pyx will be covered with a clean linen cloth, and a light will be carried before it, and a cross also, unless the cross has already been carried to another sick man. A little bell will also be rung before the priest to excite the devotion of the faithful. The priest will always have with him a stole when he carries the Eucharist to the sick, and when the sick man is not very far off, the priest will go to him in a surplice. He will have a vessel of silver or tin, kept especially for the purpose, that he may give to him the ablutions of his fingers after the communion."\*

Walter de Cantilupe, Bishop of Worcester, touches on some other details in his constitution of 1240. He forbids the priest to turn aside to any house unless he has first faithfully deposited this pledge of our Redemption in a fitting place; and he says that the people are to be reminded frequently that, when the Blessed Sacrament passes, they should kneel in the road, without caring for the mud.† I will quote that part only of the Bishop of Exeter's constitution which relates to the conduct of the people. "A bell," he says, "must be rung before the priest, that by its sound the faithful may be reminded to worship the Body of the LORD, bowing humbly, and, if possible, kneeling. And that their pains may be more meritorious we grant to all who show this reverence with pure and devout heart thirteen days' indulgence of the penance enjoined on them, that no one may think it hard to show such service to his Creator."‡

It will help us to picture the practical carrying out of these prescriptions in medieval England if I add the gloss or commentary made in the fifteenth century by the great canonist Lyndwood: "In case of necessity," he says, "if the priest cannot get a minister to carry the light, I do not think it would be improper to carry the lantern suspended from one of the arms, and to ring the bell in the best manner he can. Thus priests do in large parishes, when they go to the sick in distant places. Sometimes, when they ride, they fasten both lantern and bell to the horse's neck; and in this they deserve no blame, since necessity has no laws. . . . The adoration should be made by the bending of the head and devotion of the heart, by the outspreading of the hands,§ or their elevation, with the vocal expression of some devout prayer. I am used to say: 'Ave verum corpus natum ex Mariâ Virgine,' etc."

John Myrc's instructions are as follows:

When thou shalt to sick gone—A clean surplice cast thee on,—Take thy stole with thee right—And pull thy hood over thy sight.—Bear thine Host anent thy breast—In a box that is honest—Make thy clerk before thee *ging* (i.e. gang, go)—To bear light and bell ring.||

In another place he speaks of the duties of the people:

Teach them also, I thee pray—That when they walken in the way,—And seen the priest again them coming—God's Body with him bearing,—Then with great devotion—Teach them there to kneel adown,—Fair ne foul, spare they not—To worship Him that all hath wrought;—For glad may that man be—That once in the day may Him see.¶

We almost ask ourselves as we read these old documents, did these things really take place in England? Were all its country roads and bridle paths used

\* Wilkins, I, 581.

† *Ib.* 665.

‡ *Ib.* II, 132.

§ Giraldus says the people should cover their eyes with their hands: "Præ oculis palmam portante populo." (*Gemma Eccl.* p. 20, Rolls ed.)

|| *Instructions*, etc., I, 1957 sq.

¶ *Ib.* I. 304, sq. Myrc goes on to make some promises, which are also found in other medieval documents, but which have no better foundation than an apocryphal writing of St Augustine.

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to carry the King of kings? Did He once visit in the sacrament of His ineffable love each little cabin in the forest, in the marsh, or on the mountain side? Did the people rest from their labours when the church-bell sounded, and, uncovering their heads, or kneeling in the furrow, repeat the words of faith and adoration? Did the children hush their game, and the traffickers suspend their traffic, and the knight rein in his horse and dismount, at the well-known sound of the bell, telling that our LORD, as in the days of His earthly life, was going to visit Peter's mother-in-law, or the centurion's servant? Ah, He is still carried through the streets of our busy cities, and even the lanes of the country receive a rare visit, but His passage is unannounced and unsuspected by the multitudes. "There hath stood One among them whom they know not." Surely no Catholic, catching a glimpse from the railway carriage, as he flies through the country, of many an old Catholic church in its little hamlet of farm-houses, can be so indifferent to what was and what now is, as not to make an act of reparation for the crimes known and unknown which banished our LORD from His ancient homes, so that now once more "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

Gerald Barry, a well-known writer of the twelfth century, has recorded in his *Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales*, a trait of piety of a nobleman of that time named William de Breusa or de Braose, lord of Brecknock. "Whenever," he says, "on a journey he saw a church or a cross, although in the midst of a discourse either with his inferiors or superiors, from an excess of devotion, he immediately began to pray, and when he had finished his prayers, resumed his conversation."\* In the same work Gerald makes this prophetic remark: "Many riches of nature lie concealed through inattention, which the diligence of posterity will bring to light."† He is writing of South Wales in the year 1185. Seven hundred years have since passed, and the hidden minerals and metals have been dug up, and the face of the whole country is changed. But, alas! if the Treasure is lost which William de Braose saluted, what gain for the Welsh is there in coal and iron? No more than for the Samaritan woman, had she drawn the water from Jacob's well and lost "the Fountain springing up into life everlasting." No more than for the men of Galilee, had they obtained the bread they coveted, and lost the "living Bread which came down from heaven."

It is not that I look on Gerald Barry, or William de Braose, the archdeacon and the lord of Brecknock, as types of the Christian priest and layman. There seem to have been many defects in the character and life of both, and so may it have been with many others whose words or acts I may incidentally record. But their faith was true if not always enlightened or energetic; and both the Divine Presence and the true faith in it were the common possession of the whole people. It was this which made their grandeur and their happiness, just as the endless disagreements and dissensions of our present population show that divine faith is not theirs, but human opinion. I am no more blind to the many excellences of individuals now than to the many defects of individuals formerly. But if we look back to the days when England was united in Catholic communion, we see fulfilled in it the promise: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down My Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My Name a clean

\* *Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin*, edited by Sir R. C. Hoare, 1806, vol. 1, p. 27.

† *Ib.* p. 105.



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oblation" (Mal. i, 11); whereas in modern England we are reminded of a far different prophecy: "There shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine, but will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. iv, 3). Ears that itch after novelty, and tongues that elect their own teachers, and hands that with foolish liberality heap up conventicles side by side, not that one faith may be announced, one sacrifice offered, one God worshipped, but that every new form of error may have its own exponent—these are the things which make us look back with regret even to the wild days of medieval England.

## CHAPTER IV. RESERVATION AND THE TABERNACLE

**W**HEN the bishop was about to consecrate a church, standing with his clergy outside its door, he sang with a loud voice the following antiphon: *Zacchæe, festinans descende*, etc., "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house. And he made haste and came down and received Him with joy. This day is salvation come to this house. Alleluia."\*

Thus does the Church commemorate her privilege of being the home not only of God's children, but of God Himself, of God made man, of Emmanuel; and Christians repeat with exultation, what the Jews muttered with envy, that JESUS CHRIST has become the guest of sinners. I propose in the present chapter to treat of the place and mode of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the churches, and if I give far more examples than are necessary for the proof of the ritual observance, it will be because each gift that I record of pyx and tabernacle is a proof of lively faith and grateful heart among our forefathers to their heavenly Guest.

We have seen that from the earliest ages the Blessed Eucharist was reserved for the communion of the sick, and that precautions were taken with regard to Its renewal. The Church has in every age continued to watch over her great Deposit with the tenderest care. The Council of York in 1195 decreed that It must be renewed every Sunday.† This was repeated in the Council of Westminster in 1200.‡ The Bishop of Durham in 1220 prescribed that the Hosts should not be kept more than seven days, and should be consumed by the priest before he received the Precious Blood in his Mass, or by some innocent person of good life.§ The Synod of Exeter in 1287 says, "For the sake of the sick, the parish priest must always have consecrated particles which it is strictly forbidden to keep more than seven days. Those that remain are to be consumed on the Sunday, before the ablution of the chalice, by the celebrant or another priest, worthily and devoutly, when others are to be consecrated in greater or smaller number according to the extent of the parish."|| Giraldus says that "the priest must not presume to consecrate more Hosts than are sufficient for the people; and if any remain over, they must not be kept to the next day, except a few for viaticum, but must be consumed reverently by the clergy."¶ From these and similar documents it appears that

\* Bishop Lacy's *Pontifical*, p. 13.

† Wilkins, i, 501.

‡ *Ib.* 505.

§ *Ib.* 580. Evagrius, who wrote in the sixth century, says: "It is an old custom in Constantinople, that when there remain over a considerable quantity of

fragments of the immaculate Body of CHRIST our God, boys of a tender age should be fetched from among those who attend the schools, to eat them." (*Hist.* iv, 35.)

|| Wilkins, ii, 132. ¶ *Gemma Eccl.* Dist. i, cap. 8.

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the custom of reserving in a ciborium a large number of particles to be distributed to communicants in other Masses was then unknown. Indeed communions were much rarer then than now.

I have noticed in the previous chapter that in the earlier ages the Most Holy Sacrament was reserved sometimes in the Sacrament Porch or Sacristy, sometimes in the church itself. In the period with which we are now concerned, the chancel of the church appears to have been the sole place of reservation. From inquiries made of several who have a wide acquaintance with the history of English churches, I have not been able to hear of any instance of a Blessed Sacrament Chapel, or side chapel for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. Altars and side chapels of the gilds of Corpus CHRISTI were frequent, but they were not set apart for reservation. Mr Joyce, in his account of the windows of Fairford Church, states that the chapel at the end of the north aisle was the Lady Chapel, that at the end of the south aisle the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. He was led, however, to this conclusion not by any documents, nor by any material construction now visible in the church, but solely by the subject of the window.\* This does not follow in its order the historical series of the other windows. It represents our LORD in His Transfiguration with the sacred Host on His breast. This arrangement would merely show that in this aisle was what was called a "JESUS altar," or that it was the altar of a confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, or it might have been adopted in order to harmonize with the window in the north aisle representing our Lady's assumption.

In any case the treatment is interesting. "Upon the breast of this figure of the glorified Son of man," says Mr Joyce, "is painted a small circular disk in diameter  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch, from the edge of which proceed all round darting rays as from a sun. On its lower circumference the rays lengthen, and underneath at the centre three very long straight beams of sunlight stream downward toward the persons of the three favoured Apostles, spreading outward as they go. Within the disk are the letters I H S." The date of this window is about 1500.†

If we look to the canons of the various synods held in the thirteenth century, we find them very explicit regarding the honourable and safe custody of the great Treasure, but not defining the exact place. In a letter of Bishop Grosseteste, addressed to all the parish priests of the diocese of Lincoln, he says that "the Eucharist, which is the Sacrament of our LORD's Body, must be devoutly and faithfully preserved and be always honourably laid up in a place apart, clean and sealed (or locked)."<sup>‡</sup>

It seems that in some small churches it had been thought sufficient to place It in a purse upon a ledge or on the altar. This was strictly forbidden. Archbishop Peckham, in 1280, says: "We order that the most excellent Sacrament of the Eucharist must for the future be so kept as not to be placed in a purse, for fear lest It should be broken, but in a beautiful pyx adorned within with whitest linen; so that It may be easily taken out or put back without danger of breaking."

The synod of Chichester in 1289, the canons of which were adopted a

\* I learnt this in a letter from himself.

† As about this date much devotion was shown to the Holy Name of JESUS, and St Bernardine of Siena had established the practice of representing it exactly in the manner described above, it seems very probable that the artist intended to symbolise the Holy Name

rather than the Sacred Host. See *Liturgical Year*, Christmas, vol. II, p. 262, for an account of the feast of the Holy Name, and the manner of honouring it by emblematic representations.

‡ *Ep.* 52 (Rolls ed.), "in loco singulari, mundo et signato."



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few days later by the province of York, says: "The Holy Eucharist (as well as the baptismal font and holy oils) are to be diligently guarded under lock and key, under pain of three months' suspension *ab officio*." \* The Council of Lambeth, in 1281, orders that "in every parish church there must be a decent tabernacle, with a lock (*clausura*). In this the Body of the LORD must be placed in a very beautiful pyx and linen coverings, but not in a purse lest It be broken." †

What is here to be understood by the word Tabernacle? The question is proposed because it is certain that in England an almost universal custom prevailed until the sixteenth century of hanging the Receptacle of the Blessed Sacrament over the altar; and Lyndwood, a great English canonist of the fifteenth century, in his commentary on this decree of Archbishop Peckham, considers that the letter of the decree had not been carried out, although its purpose had been attained in another way. In saying this he relies on the derivation of the word from *tabula*, from which he concludes that a tabernacle should be a fixed wooden construction. In the time of Lyndwood the tabernacles used on the Continent were for the most part fixed, whether upon or near the altars or in recesses in the walls, though the practice of hanging the pyx, as in England, was not altogether unknown.

Yet I conceive that Lyndwood was mistaken in thinking that the constitution of Lambeth had not been literally carried out, since the word tabernacle might apply to a hanging as fitly as to an immovable construction. ‡ The ecclesiastical use of this word is known to have varied in different times and countries. Both the missal and pontifical contain a "*Benedictio tabernaculi sive vasculi pro sacrosancta Eucharistia conservanda*." Some liturgical writers understand this of the box or cupboard or fixed structure in which the pyx or ciborium is placed. Others, with more probability, interpret it of the ciborium itself; and certainly the word is used in the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* for what we call a monstrance: "*Sequitur episcopus portans manibus suis SS. Sacramentum in tabernaculo sive ostensorio inclusum*." § In France, in the twelfth century, it was used for the receptacle of the pyx. Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris, says of some of his priests: "*Ita sunt negligentes quod nondum habent pyxidem eburneam, nec tabernaculum ubi reservetur cum honore Corpus DOMINI*." But in the same country, at a later period, the word indicated the covering or canopy. A document of 1675 speaks of "*un tabernacle de drap d'or avec figures, doublé en satin de soie cramoisie, rouge*," etc. ||

In England the word was generally used for a niche to receive a statue, or a triptych. Thus Henry VI gave to Winchester College a "tabernacle of gold adorned with precious stones and with the images of the Holy Trinity and of the Blessed Virgin of crystal," ¶ and an inventory of Lincoln mentions a "tabernacle of ivory standing upon four feet with two leaves, with one image of our Lady in the middle, and the salutation in one leaf and the nativity in the other." \*\* On the other hand, the receptacle of the pyx was very rarely, if ever, after the thirteenth century, called a tabernacle in English documents. William Durand, however, a French contemporary of Peckham, says: "*In quibusdam ecclesiis super altare collocatur arca seu tabernaculum in quo corpus DOMINI et*

\* Wilkins, II, 169.

† *Ib.* 48.

‡ [Upon this see further the supplementary note in square brackets printed at the end of this chapter.]

§ *Cærem. Episc.* I. II, cap. 33, n. 8.

|| *Revue de l'Art Chrétien*, Avril 1879, art. "Les Tabernacles de la Renaissance à Rome." p. 258.

¶ Lowth's *Life of Wykeham*, p. 181.

\*\* Dugdale's *Monast.* VIII, p. 1204. When the expression is ambiguous I should interpret it in the same way. Thus the *Register of Chertsey* (Lord Clifford's MS.) says: "*Abbas construxit tabernaculum super magnum altare apud Egeham*" (in 1332). Here I understand a reredos.

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reliquiæ ponuntur,”\* and Peckham may have meant the same thing, though this is uncertain, and no conclusion can be made from the word itself.† In the Vulgate the word *tabernaculum*, as applied to the Jewish tabernacle, comprises both the structure of wood and the curtains which enclosed it. It is also used for mere tents of boughs. In the Apocalypse it is used for a dwelling-place, but in such a way that no fitter description could be given of the hanging pyx and canopy as used in England than that of the vision of St John: “I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God” (Apoc. xxi, 2, 3).

Compare with this vision of St John the description given of the tabernacle or hanging pyx in the great church of Durham. “Within the said choir over the high altar did hang a rich and most sumptuous canopy, for the Blessed Sacrament to hang within it, which had two irons fastened in the French pier” (i.e., the high screen of Caen stone) “very finely gilt, which held the canopy over the midst of the said high altar—that the pyx did hang in it that it could not move nor stir—whereon did stand a pelican, all of silver, upon the height of the said canopy, very finely gilded, giving her blood to her young ones in token that CHRIST did give His blood for the sins of the world. And the pyx wherein the Blessed Sacrament hung was of most pure gold, curiously wrought of goldsmith’s work. And the white cloth that hung over the pyx was of very fine lawn, all embroydered and wrought about with gold and red silk. And four great and round knobs of gold, marvellous and cunningly wrought, with great tassels of gold and red silk hanging at them and at the four corners of the white lawn cloth. And the crook that hung within the cloth that the pyx did hang on, was of gold, and the cords that did draw it up and down were made of fine white strong silk.”‡

Before I give other examples of this method of reserving the sacred Host I will anticipate a difficulty. The synods command that the Blessed Sacrament should be kept under lock and key. Could this be done unless the pyx were enclosed in some kind of cupboard? I reply that the pyx itself was locked. In the constitutions of Peter Quivil, Bishop of Exeter, in 1287, it is said: “The LORD’S Body must be placed in a very clean burse, and this enclosed *under lock and key*, in a clean and decent pyx of silver or ivory or other proper material, which the priest must carry on his breast, a light being carried before him, because He who is the Brightness of eternal light is being carried forth.”§ Thus the pyx, even when carried out, is locked. A curious history, related by Raineri, a monk of Liège in 1182, while it shows that the pyx was locked proves also that the English custom of suspending it before the high altar was then practised in Belgium. Raineri gives a graphic account of the fall of a thunderbolt on the church of his monastery. “The lightning,” he says, “entered by the door and leaping over the Lenten curtain which hung over the great crucifix and before the chancel, it darted to and fro about the high altar, dividing without burning the altar-cloth, and so out of the door again.” Raineri ran to the altar, and, to give his own words: “I found the silver pyx, in which the

\* *Ration, Div. Off.* t. 1, cap. 2 et 3.

† [Archbishop Peckham’s meaning seems to be sufficiently determined by the language of the contemporary synod of Exeter, which prescribes the erection of a sacramentarium lapideum et immo-

bile. But see note at the end of this chapter.]

‡ *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society), p. 7. [Canon Fowler’s notes on this passage in the new edition (1903) of the *Rites of Durham* may be consulted with profit.] § Wilkins, II, 132.



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LORD'S Body was kept, fallen on the altar, for the great heat had consumed the iron chain by which it used to hang, as if it were straw, so that we could scarcely find a few links. Full of fear I took it in my hand, and found it firmly locked (*serrata*),\* though blackened like ink, and having only a little opening made by I know not what workman. I rubbed off the black smoke with my hands and opened it, and found three particles within perfectly entire, though a little discoloured, and I showed them to those who stood near me."†

The description here given of the locked pyx seems conclusive on this subject; and the general rule is further confirmed by the mention in an inventory of an unlocked pyx as an exception.‡ I will give the whole passage because it reveals to us the very interesting fact of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in three places connected with St Paul's Cathedral in London, though in distinct buildings. A list of the treasures of that cathedral was made in 1295. I pass over the account of the five golden chalices, and twenty-five silver ones, the vestments, crosses, candlesticks innumerable, to mention only what regards the present subject. For the high altar in the cathedral there was a cup of silver all gilt with sculptured work of lions and other beasts, hung by a silver chain, to contain the Eucharist, to be hung before the altar on feasts, the gift of King Henry (probably Henry III). Also another gilt silver pyx "cum opere coeleato," and silver chain. In St Faith's Church, in the crypt, mention is made of a gilt cup of copper, with an ivory pyx, *without lock, closed within*, in which the Eucharist is placed. Also in the charnel chapel in the cemetery: "A ciborium of crystal above the altar, to hold the Eucharist."§

In not a few of our old churches, recesses, with hinges which show that they once had doors, may still be seen. Some of these may perhaps have been set apart for the custody of the Most Holy; yet this must not without proof be assigned as their origin and purpose, for such cupboards or ambreys were used to hold vestments or holy oils, or whatever had to be carefully kept. The author of *The Durham Rites* tells us that there was an ambrey at the north side of the high altar to contain vestments, and another at the south side for chalices; and that what were called "the nine altars" were partitioned off with wainscot, carved with branches and flowers, and beautifully painted and gilded; and that these partitions contained the several lockers and ambreys for the safe keeping of the vestments and ornaments belonging to each altar.||



PYX CLOTH

The only unmistakable example I have met with of a fixed tabernacle

\*[It might be doubted whether such words as *serrata* or *serrura* ought to be pressed further than the meaning "securely fastened," i.e. with a catch or pin. Raineri says nothing about a lock or about running to fetch a key. He would hardly have been carrying the key about with him.]

† Migne, tom. ccriv, p. 141.

‡ [Father Bridgett's view is clearly shared by Dr J. C. Cox, a high authority, who says (*English Church Furniture*, 1907, p. 43): "The true pyx was

always provided with a single lock and key. At the episcopal visitation of his diocese made by Bishop Waltham, of Salisbury, in 1393, one of the questions asked in every church was as to the condition of the locks and keys on three pieces of church furniture, which were always to be kept locked, namely, the pyx, the chrismatory and the font."]

§ Dugdale's *St Paul's*, pp. 310-339. "Sine serura, interius clausa," p. 335.

|| *Durham Rites*, p. 2 (Surtees).

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erected on the altar, or in immediate connexion with it, is in Scotland. From the inventory of ornaments belonging to King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, drawn up by the rector in his visitation in 1542, we find that there was "the altar of the venerable Sacrament built by the rector of Kinkell. On this altar is a place (*locus*) for the Sacrament, of pyramidal form, given by the same rector."\*

Instances of ambreys or cupboards in the wall near the high altar can be still traced in Scotland. In the church at Kinkell in the diocese of Aberdeen, in the north wall of the chancel opposite the sedilia, is a recess with the inscription over it in green stone: "Hic est servatum corpus de virgine natum." Underneath are the words "obiit M. A. G. 1528." These are the initials of Magister Alexander Galloway, who probably erected this tabernacle as well as the crucifix in the wall near it.† There is a similar recess in the church of Auchindoir in the same diocese. "In the north-east corner," says a local historian, "there is a very complete crucifix, cut in stone with the letters J. N. R. J. over it. Below it is a niche in the wall for the elements, with the following inscription immediately over it: 'Hic e. corporu. D. N. J. C. V. M.' On the lower edge of the niche, but now concealed by one of the seats, are these words: Hic est servatum corpus ex virgine natum."‡

In documents relating to the cathedral of Aberdeen mention is made more than once of the sacrament-house. Thus in 1559, when the Bishop distributes for safety the treasure of the cathedral, he gives to one canon "the covering of the sacrament-house." In an inventory of 1562§ there is "antipend for the sacrament-house with a dornick towle to the same," and immediately after "a capin for the sepulture, of damas, and some other of double worsett, with a great verdure that lays before the altar." And in a list of things stolen by some robbers, "four great knops of gold and silk with their great cords of green silk that hang at the sacrament-house, price £3."|| In the inventory of the ornaments given by Bishop Gavin Dunbar to the high altar during his episcopate (1518-1531) is mentioned "a veil most magnificent of very fine linen (*bisso villosa*) of a light blue colour, with most handsome representations worked in gold, together with wooden supports and rods beautifully painted, with good iron keys to guide these supports to the sacrament-house, with balls decorated with gold; together with a table for carrying the venerable Sacrament, with antipendia decorated with letters of gold and scriptures embroidered as befits the house of God."

Whether this sacrament-house was a hanging tabernacle over the high altar, or an Easter Sepulchre, or a shrine to be carried on the table (*mensa*) in solemn processions of Corpus CHRISTI, I cannot determine. I incline, however, to the last supposition, since in the Epistolare of Gavin Dunbar there is mentioned a "canopy to carry over the venerable Sacrament *ex bisso villosa hyacinthina*, with images designs and sculpture of gold work, with poles,"¶ and this is evidently the same canopy mentioned above.

Mr Mackenzie Walcott states that at Pluscardine, six miles from Elgin,

\* Kennedy's *Annals of Aberdeen*, II, 444. [It seems to be probable that this receptacle was not, in the strict sense, a tabernacle erected on the altar, but only a cupboard in the wall behind the altar, and that it in other respects resembled the still existing remains of Sacrament Houses of which several examples survive in Scotland. See Cowper in *Transactions of St Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, III, p. 203.]

† *Collections for a History of Aberdeen and Banff*

(Spalding Club), p. 571. [A series of studies upon these Scotch "Sacrament Houses" will be found in the *Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society*, continued over several years.]

‡ *Ib.* p. 614, from *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. XII, p. 449.

§ *Registr. Episc. I.* p. 86. (Spalding Club.)

|| *Regist. Aberd.* II, 192.

¶ *Ib.* 251



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once belonging to the Clugniacs, there are remains of a credence on the north side, with angels supporting a vat, into which they are pressing clusters of grapes; also of a tabernacle showing angels holding a pyx and two others with a shield.\* This again might possibly have been intended for the Easter Sepulchre. Mr Walcott, however, considers this and some other Scotch examples to prove that after the war of independence the Scotch usage became different from the English, which was certainly to reserve the Eucharist in a pendant tabernacle. He mentions a recess at Kintire, five feet high, with sculptures of a monstrance, a crucifix and angels with crossed stoles, and vested in albs, with the legend "JESU MARIA." At Deskford there is the text, *Ego sum panis vivus qui de cælo descendi* (John vi, 51), with a recess on each side.†

As regards England at least, whatever may have been the original meaning of Archbishop Peckham's constitution, the uniform practical interpretation is certain. Harding, in his controversy with Jewel, distinctly says that though there have been divers customs in divers countries, yet "the hanging up of It on high hath been the manner in England."‡

When, however, Cardinal Pole took measures in 1555 for the restoration of religion in England, he seems to have wished that the old custom should not be revived, but that England should conform to the manner of reservation more usual on the Continent. In quoting the decree of John of Peckham, he expressly says that the tabernacle "be raised and fixed in the middle of the high altar, if it can conveniently be done, so that it cannot easily be moved; otherwise in the most convenient and honourable place and nearest to the high altar which can be found." The ordinaries were to begin in their own churches and see that it was done elsewhere. A perpetual lamp or taper was to burn before the most holy Sacrament.§ This decree was but imperfectly carried out when the death of Mary in 1558 brought about the destruction of all tabernacles throughout the land.

A few examples of the splendid pyxes used in England in former times will both illustrate the mode of reservation, and still more the piety of our ancestors. Ivory pyxes were in general perhaps the least costly, and were used in village churches, as for example in the village of Histon, near Cambridge, "an ivory pyx with lock" (*pixis eburnea et sub serrurâ*) is mentioned in a register of the thirteenth century.|| Yet occasionally these were very costly. In St George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1385, there was "a noble ivory pyx, garnished with silver plates, gilt, with a foot covered with leopards and precious stones, having a cover of silver gilt with a border of sapphires, and on the top of the cover a figure of the crucifix with Mary and John, garnished with pearls, with three chains meeting in a disk of silver gilt, with a long silver chain by which it hangs."¶

Small silver and copper pyxes were also common in villages, as in the parish of Heybridge near Malden in Essex we find one of each kind.\*\* But silver at least admitted of great magnificence. Geoffrey of Croyland, Abbot of Peterborough in 1299, gave to the high altar of his abbey church "a cup of

\* *The Ancient Church of Scotland*, p. 292.

† *Ib.*, p. 33.

‡ The 9th article of the controversy (A.D. 1564) is: "On the reverent hanging-up of the Sacrament under a canopy."

§ "Fiat tabernaculum decens et honestum cum sera et clavi, quod in altum elevatum in medio summi altaris affigatur si commode fieri potest; alias in commodiori et honorabiliore et magis summo altari vicino

loco qui haberi potest." (Wilkins, iv, 121 and 797.) This decree is quite contrary to the existence of chapels of the Blessed Sacrament, even in cathedral churches. (See also *Injunctions of the Cardinal in the Diocese of Gloucester*. Wilkins, iv, 148.)

|| *Churches of Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge Camden Soc.), p. 60.

¶ Dugdale, *Mon.* viii, 1365.

\*\* *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 175.

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silver gilt, with the silver chains and a desk of silver gilt; and inside the cup another pyx (*capsula*) of silver gilt to hold the Body of CHRIST."

In the inventory of Salisbury Cathedral in 1222 there occurs a crown of silver with three silver chains, with a silver dove for the Eucharist. In the church of St Paul's, London, was also a dove.\* At Ludlow the pyx was shaped as an image of our Lady of Pity; and in St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, was "a Trinity of silver and gilt, four angels of silver and gilt, and an image of our Lady and the HOLY GHOST bearing the Sacrament, of silver and gilt, hanging over the high altar, weighing 316 oz."†

At the Abbey of St Albans, as we learn from Matthew Paris, Eadfrid, the fifth abbot, in the time of King Edmund the Pious (A.D. 941-6), had purchased a most beautiful vessel (*cyphum desiderabilem*) as admirable in workmanship as in material, and had offered it to St Albans to place in it the Body of our LORD. Robert, the eighteenth abbot, who died 1166, placed the Eucharist in a precious vessel under a silver crown. His successor, Simon, had made by brother Baldwin the goldsmith a vessel most admirable, of pure red gold with gems of inestimable value set about it. This was to be hung over the high altar, and it may be said the workmanship even surpassed the material. When King Henry II heard of this he gratefully and devoutly sent to St Albans a most noble and precious cup in which the shrine (*theca*) immediately containing the Body of CHRIST should be placed.‡

Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham, dying in 1381, leaves a silver cup, gilt within and enamelled without, for the Eucharist.§ Michael de Northberg, Bishop of London, by his will in 1361 left £2,000 for the foundation of the Charter House, two large silver basins to serve at the altar there, with a vessel of silver enamelled, in which the sacred Host should be placed.||

Among the rich ornaments belonging to Holyrood Abbey, Edinburgh, in 1493, were a chalice of pure gold with paten, weighing forty-six ounces, a great "Eucharist" of silver gilt weighing 160 ozs, and a great silver cup for the Blessed Sacrament.¶

Eustace, Bishop of Ely (1187-1293), one of the three who published the great interdict in the reign of John, gave to his church a gold chalice and a gold pyx for the Eucharist.\*\*

Among the "cups for the LORD's Body" at Canterbury was one of gold offered by Louis, King of France, as among the six gold chalices was one given by Philip, King of France.

William de Longespee, Earl of Salisbury in 1226, son of Henry II, besides founding a house of Carthusians, left them among other things a pyx of gold.††

Among the riches stolen by Henry VIII from Winchester was "a gold pyx with gold cover for carrying the Blessed Sacrament."‡‡

Cups of beryl are frequently mentioned as destined for this use. Thus, in 1447, John, Duke of Exeter, leaves to the church of St Catherine, near the Tower of London, a cup of beryl, garnished with gold, pearls and precious stones, to put the Holy Sacrament in; as also a gold chalice and many rich ornaments.§§ Among the innumerable legacies of Bishop William of Wyke-

\* [The authority for this is lacking, and it is worth while to notice that Mr St John Hope, whose acquaintance with English medieval ecclesiology is quite exceptional, considers that these eucharistic doves in England were extremely rare (*Transactions of St Paul's Eccles. Soc.*, III, 197).]

† Waterton, *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, part II, pp. 99, 229; Rock, IV, 102.

‡ *Historia Abbatum*.

§ *Wills of the Northern Counties* (Surtees), p. 37.

|| Dugdale's *St Paul's*, p. 25.

¶ *The Ancient Church of Scotland*, by Rev. M. Walcott, p. 306.

\*\* *Anglia Sacra*, I, 634.

†† *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 50.

‡‡ Dugdale, I, 204. §§ *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 256.



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ham to his church of Winchester was "one vessel of berill ordained for the Body of CHRIST."\*

In the accounts of the constable of the castle of Dover are two entries that notice how the cup was surrounded by a canopy of silk or lawn. Thus, in 1344, "one cup of silver-gilt with its cover (of silver) to receive the Body of CHRIST, and a cover of silk knotted to hang over the said cup." And in 1361, in old French *1 coupe de coper endorre, 1 couverture pur couvrir la dite coupe de sai, 1 buste de ivoire pur le corps nostre seigneur deinz la dite coupe*,† i.e., a cup of copper gilt and a cover of silk to put over it, and a box of ivory to be placed inside the said cup and to contain the Body of our LORD.

From these examples it appears that the sacred Species were placed in a clean linen corporal, and this inside the pyx. The sacred particles were not allowed to touch the pyx itself. In a directory of the Cistercians published by Dr Rock,‡ it is prescribed that the corporal placed inside the pyx should on Holy Thursday be carefully purified and then burnt, being replaced by another on Easter Sunday. Sometimes at least, if not generally, the small pyx was placed inside a larger one, so that it could be taken out and carried to the sick. The Bishop of Durham, in 1220, prescribes that two pyxes at least should be in every church. "When the Eucharist," he says, "is to be carried to the sick, let the priest have a clean and decent pyx, so that one always remains in the church, and in the other, containing the Eucharist enclosed in a very clean burse, he may carry the LORD's Body to the sick. The pyx will be covered with a clean linen,"§ etc.

It is probable that the common name for the pyx, while French continued to be the fashionable language, was *la coupe*. Thus in the register of the cathedral of Aberdeen, in 1496, we find, *Item unum "lie cowp" argenteum deauratum pendens coram magno altari pro eucharistia.*|| The same name frequently occurs elsewhere.

The pyx or cup was always enclosed in a cover of silk or other rich material, varying of course in value or beauty according to the piety of the faithful or riches of the church; and in many cases it would be changed at the greater festivals.¶ In the churchwardens' accounts of St Mary Hill, London, in 1485, we find "a pyx-cloth for the high altar of sipers (i.e., Cyprus silk) fringed with gold with knopps of gold and silk of Spanish making, of the gift of Mr Doctor Hatcliff, parson. Item, a pyx-cloth of sipers fringed with green silk and red with the knopps silver and gilt with corners going,\*\* of Master Suckling's gift. Item, a canopy for the pyx of white Baudekin."

Sir Thomas Camberworth in his will (1450) writes: "I will the prior of Bridlington have the box for God's Body with the covering that hangs in the chapel."††

The covering was sometimes called the canopy or sudary, and hung from a corona covering the chains and occasionally looped together underneath. The whole could be raised above the reach or let down at pleasure, like our sanctuary-lamps. It hung, however, immediately over the altar, as we see from the accident above related by Raineri in the church of Liège. Hoveden

\* *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 768.

† *Archæological Journal*, vol. xi, pp. 382, 384.

‡ "Linteum vetus super patenam diligentius excussum, ne aliqua mica vel particula intus remaneat, comburatur super piscinam et cineres in ipsam projiciantur." (Rock, iv, p. 85.)

§ Wilkins, i, 581.

|| *Reg.* ii, 167 (Spalding Club).

¶ [There seems to be at least one instance in which the medieval pyx-cloth or canopy has survived to our own day, that is at Hessel in Suffolk. See a drawing of it on p. 177.]

\*\* [This probably means going up and down with a cord.]

†† Will published by Mr Peacock in *Academy*, Sept. 27, 1879.

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and Matthew Paris also tell us that while King Stephen was hearing Mass at Lincoln on the feast of the Purification in 1140, not only did the candle break in his hand when he went forward to make his offering, but "the pyx in which was the LORD's Body fell upon the altar, the chain having broken;" and these things were looked on as portents of his coming defeat.\*

From the earliest ages it had been the custom to keep a light burning day and night before our LORD's Body.† The constitutions of Walter of Cantilupe, Bishop of Worcester, 1240, however, merely say, "In churches which can afford it, a lamp must burn day and night before the Eucharist."

The chroniclers‡ tell us that in 1200, Eustace, Abbot of Flay, was sent into England by the Pope, and preached everywhere with many miracles. He exhorted men to take the cross for the recovery of the Holy Land, to give up markets and servile work on Sundays (i.e., from 3 P.M. on Saturday to sunrise on Monday), he bade the rich keep on their table "CHRIST's dish" (*discus CHRISTI*) into which each person put some part of his meat for the poor; and "to the rectors of churches and priests, as well as to the people, he gave frequent admonitions, that a light should burn continually before the Eucharist, in order that He who enlightens every man who cometh into this world, might in reward for this temporal light grant them the eternal light of glory."

Instead of giving proof that in the great abbeys and cathedrals abundant provision was made for the perpetual light, I will give in preference a few examples of priestly or lay devotion shown to our LORD in smaller parish churches.

Henry of Workedlegh, for the spiritual welfare of Joanna, his wife, of his father, ancestors and descendants, and for all Christian souls, binds himself "to GOD and to the high altar of the church of St Mary" to pay to the rector of Eccles a pound of wax annually at the feast of St Martin; so that in case of failure he and his heirs may be compelled by ecclesiastical censures.§

William Sedman "settled a wax taper to burn continually day and night for ever before the Body of our LORD in the chancel of the church of St Peter of Mancroft, Norwich."||

Sometimes the foundation is for a wax taper, sometimes for oil. The churchwardens' account of Hedon in Holderness in 32nd of Henry VI have "for six gallons of oil bought for the lamps hanging before the body of JESUS CHRIST, in the choir of the said chapel of St Augustine, 5s. 2d."¶ In the church of our Lady of Alfreton in Derbyshire we find an entry of 13s. for lamps yearly, a large sum, equal to nearly as many pounds in modern money; and in the same church 43s. for lands given by John Ormund for ninety-nine years for finding of a lamp burning night and day before the high altar. This was in 1503.\*\*

Edmund Verney, in 1494, leaves directions for a lamp to be kept continually burning in the chancel of the church of the Friars Preachers at Warwick, before the sacred Host; as does Ralph Shirley in 1513 in the parish church of Rakedale.††

\* In St George's Chapel, Windsor, the less precious pyx had two canopies: "cum duabus canapis, majore et minore," Dugdale, viii, 1365. (See Rock, iii, 201-208.) Viollet le Duc, in his *Dictionnaire*, has a very good treatise on Tabernacles, with drawings of the hanging pyx in its canopy.

† [Although this view is seemingly shared in part by Abbot Gasquet (*Parish Life*, p. 52) it can hardly be accepted without hesitation. Evidence seems lacking to prove the continuous use of a lamp in any but the

richer churches, and that quoted for the earlier centuries goes to pieces upon examination. See "The Early Cultus of the Blessed Sacrament," in *The Month*, April, 1907, pp. 377 seq.]

‡ Higden, Matthew Paris, and others.

§ *Coucher Book of Whalley*, iii, 923.

|| Blomefield's *Norfolk*, iv, 206.

¶ *History of Holderness*, by G. Poulson, vol. ii, p. 166

\*\* Cox's *Notes on the Churches of Derbyshire*, i, 9.

†† *Testamenta Vetusta*, pp. 421, 542.



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Such examples might be multiplied from old documents; I will be satisfied with one more example. It is the will of a priest.

Henry Blomeir, chaplain of Sedbergh in Yorkshire, and probably one of the masters of the free school there, on November 5, 1543, makes his will as follows: \* "I commend my soul into the hands of my LORD GOD, JESUS CHRIST, my Creator and Redeemer, in full faith of our mother, holy Church, His Spouse, with full hope of His infinite mercy, beseeching His blessed Mother St Mary, and all saints and company of heaven, to pray for me. And my mortal body to be buried in Christian man's burial, if it please GOD, in the churchyard of the said Sedbergh at the east end of the church, nigh the graves of my mother and sister; and at the day of my burial I will there be complete observance done for my soul, after the usage there. Item, for the use of the more honest, cleanly, and decent keeping and washing of the adornments belonging to the altars of the said church, for the more reverence of the Blessed Sacrament there ministered, as corporaxes, altar cloths, albs, towels, and such other, I bequeath 20s. to be ordered by the discretion of the churchwardens and their successors, to uphold the said 20s. yearly with continuance, for the use and purpose aforesaid. Item, I bequeath other 20s. to be ordered in like manner by the said churchwardens and their successors, to the upholding of one sirge (taper) of wax yearly with continuance, to stand before the Blessed Sacrament in the said church."

As this will was made in 1543, and in 1547, the first of Edward VI, all such lights were quenched and the foundations for them confiscated to the King's use, this good priest's candle only burnt for four years. No doubt he and the others have their reward, as if their pious intentions had been carried out, as they intended, "for ever."

This may be the place to mention a few examples of sacred vessels made to carry our LORD's Body in procession.

In St Mary Hill, London, in 1427 was "a coupe of silver and gold to bere in GODDE's Body with cristall."

In the inventory of the church of Crediton in 1534, besides "a round pyx of silver, for the Sacrament, whole gilt," we find "a monstrate silver, whole gilt, with a berill in the midst and a crucifix in the top." †

In Ely, after the surrender of the monastery, we find "a pyx gilt," weighing seventeen ounces, and "a standing monstral for the Sacrament."

Edward, Lord Despenser, in 1375, leaves by will to the abbey of Tewkesbury, amongst other things, a vessel wherein to put the Body of CHRIST on Corpus Christi day, which was given him by the King of France. ‡

In an indenture of 1447 among the archives of Bridgwater, besides two cups of silver for the Sacrament and one box of latén (brass) for the Sacrament, mention is made of "one demonstration for the Sacrament of silver gilt." §

The word monstral, or monstrant (in Latin, *monstrantia*), was used both for reliquaries in which relics were exposed for veneration on certain days, and

\* *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Richmond* (Surtees), p. 47. [In spite of these examples and others that might be quoted, the bequests left for lamps to burn before the Blessed Sacrament are relatively few compared with the very large number of entries in wills which have reference to other lights, e.g., lamps to be burned before particular shrines, altars or objects of devotion. Some idea of the proportions in which these occur may be obtained from the lists in Duncan and Hussey, *Testamenta Cantiana*. A form of bequest of

not unfrequent occurrence is that of wax or money for torches to burn during the elevation. For example, "I bequeith to the seid church ij torches of waxe of a convenient weight to serve and brenne at the tyme of the levacion of the High Masse ther, wile they will endure." *Trans. St Paul's Eccles. Soc.* III, p. 250.]

† *Oliver's Monasticon Exoniense*, p. 84.

‡ *Test. Vet.* p. 99.

§ App. to *Third Report of Historical MS. Commission*, p. 316.

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for the shrine in which the Blessed Sacrament was carried on days of procession. Both are mentioned among the plate of Worcester Priory at the surrender in 1540.\* “Thus one monstrant of silver gilt weighing 117 ozs; one monstrans of silver gilt weighing 13½ ozs, and one monstrans of silver gilt with the brains of St Thomas of Canterbury, 8½ ozs”†

In the inventory of Henry VIII's plunder at Lincoln in 1536, is “one great feretrum, silver and gilt, with one cross aisle, and one steeple in the middle and one cross in the top with twenty pinnacles, and an image of our Lady in one end an image of St Hugh in the other end, having in length half a yard and one inch; and it is set in a table of wood, and a thing in the middle to put in the Sacrament when it is borne, weighing 341 ozs of the gift of John Welborne.”‡

One of these splendid shrines has partially survived to the present day, and is in the possession of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.§ It was called the Gripe's Eye, sometimes written Grypshey, because it consisted of an ostrich's egg richly set (a gripe being a vulture and an eye the old English for egg).

Henry de Tangmer, a burgess of Cambridge, had presented the guild of Corpus Christi with a cup which bore the same name. This was replaced by a larger one weighing 78½ ozs given by Sir John Cambridge. This second Gripe's eye was also called the Monstre. It was broken in 1553, but afterward's mended at the expense of Richard Fletcher, Protestant Bishop of Bristol (1589-1592). The mounting is very plain.

That which was called in England a monstre, monstat, monstral, monstrans and demonstration, was called in Scotland not unfrequently a Eucharist. In the chronicle of John Smith, monk of Kinloss in Moray, there occurs the following entry, *Anno Domini 1529 Episcopus Rossensis benedixit eucharistiam majorem*, and Ferserius, a Piedmontese who spent many years at Kinloss, in his life of Abbot Thomas Crystall, says, “he brought to Kinloss a silver shrine (*theca*) commonly called a Eucharist, half a cubit high and exquisitely made.”|| Of this abbot I take the following account from Mr Walcott's *Ancient Church of Scotland*:¶ “He was abbot from 1505-1535, and was a most munificent benefactor of his church. He gave to it a hanging chandelier over the high altar, a five-branched candlestick, two standards like pillars; three bells called Anne, Mary and Jerome; a superb metal frontal for the altar; chasubles of silk, one paled with green (*porracea*), one paled with red; a suit of Venetian or sea-blue, one of light blue (*cyaneus*), one of watered silk, one of blue velvet, one of purple frieze, one with orphreys of gold wrought with figures of saints in purple, crimson, and hyacinthine silk, one of black half-silk (the Scottish vorsetic) with white stoles for burials, seven copes of gold and hyacinthine needlework; a mitre with pearls and precious stones, a Eucharist of silver, three and a half feet high, with other plate of Flemish work, as were also the vestments; and a Bible in six volumes with many other valuable books.”

In the cathedral of Aberdeen, the register of 1518 says there was a copper Eucharist gilt for the ordinary use of the church, and a silver gilt Eucharist to be carried in the solemnities of the year. This was made like a tower.\*\* An earlier register of 1436 gives us some account of this. It was shaped like a

\* Green's *History of Worcester*, app. vi.

† There were also two gold chalices weighing 40 oz. each, an image of our Lady of the Assumption gilt, weighing 204 oz., and another image of our Lady, parcel-gilt, 60 oz., besides much more.

‡ Dugdale, viii, 1279.

§ *Old English Plate*, by W. J. Cripps, p. 278, and Ackermann's *Cambridge, History of C. C. C.*

|| *Records of the Monastery of Kinloss*, by John Stuart (1872), pp. 11, 32.

¶ *Ancient Church of Scotland*, p. 279.

\*\* *Reg.* ii, 172.



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castle and had a berill for receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and on the top was an image of our Lady of Pity, the gift of Sir John Forstar. The shrine itself was the gift of Bishop Henry of Liſtoun.\*

In the same church was a “monstrance like a silver chalice to keep the venerable Sacrament in the visitation of the sick, weighing twenty ounces;† and a still larger one, six pounds weight, at the head of which was an ouch of gold, well enamelled, of our LORD of Pity, craftily made.”‡ When Bishop William Stewart at the invasion of the English in 1544 was carrying away the jewels of the cathedral for safety, he was set upon by James Forbes of Corsinda and robbed; and he only redeemed the treasure, imperfect and mutilated, upon payment of 600 marks. The great Eucharist had lost § three angels from the top, bearing the title of the cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. In this there were *duo berilli cum custodibus pro conservatione venerabilis sacramenti*, and it had a handsome wooden case. *Monstrantia lignea honeste decorata et depicta, cum angelis et candelabris, pro custodia majoris monstrantie tempore et loco opportunis.*||

In the Church of St Nicholas, Aberdeen, was a Eucharist (or Occryst as it is written) weighing four pounds and two ounces. It was made in Aberdeen in 1450, and sold with the rest of the plate of the church in 1561 to Patrick Menzies for £540.¶

The Blessed Sacrament was carried under a canopy or baldacchino,\*\* of which many instances occur in registers and wills. The most curious that I have met with is the following; “Nicholas Hooker, rector of St Pancras, Winchester, and of Twyford, and a fellow of Winchester College, dying in January 1546, makes a bequest as follows: ‘I give the tester of my bed and the head sheet to the church of Twyford, the tester to be borne over the Blessed Sacrament upon Corpus Christi Days, and the head sheet of silk to make an altarcloth in the said church.’”†† But the most touching legacy of all is that of Agnes Badgcroft, an ex-nun of the dissolved Abbey of St Mary’s, Winton, and sub-prioress at the time of the dissolution in 1536. Dying in the reign of Mary, in her will June 30, 1556, she writes: “I bequeath my professed ring to the Blessed Sacrament for to be sold and to buy a canopy for the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of St Peter’s Colbroke.” What a beautiful revelation is this of twenty years of fidelity to her vows and her faith on the part of this poor nun rudely driven from her religious home by the tyranny of Henry!‡‡

As I have been obliged to allude more than once in this chapter to the sacrileges of Henry VIII, I will conclude by recording something more edifying of his predecessors in connexion with the reservation of the Body of our LORD.

King Henry V in 1419 drew up a body of ordinances for his soldiers in time of war. The second of these is as follows:

## *For Holy Church*

“That no man be so hardy, of less that he be priest, to touch the Sacrament of God’s Body, upon pain to be drawn and hanged therefor; nor that

\* *Reg.* II, pp. 144, 167.

† *Ib.* p. 186.

‡ *Ib.* p. 196.

§ *Ib.* p. 185.

|| *Ib.* p. 193.

¶ *Council Register of Aberdeen*, vol. I, pp. 19, 320, 329.

\*\* According to Dr Tristram, in the famous Baldacchino controversy, derived from Baldach, an old name for Babylon, whence came the stuff of which such canopies were composed. (*Times*, Dec. 16, 1873.)

[Modern etymologists, see e.g. the *Oxford Historical Dictionary*, hold that Baldacchino and baudekin are the same word, both meaning cloth of Bagdad, from Baldacco, the Italian form of Bagdad.]

†† *History of Church of Wyke*, by F. J. Baigent, p. 25.

‡‡ Communicated from the original will by the kindness of Mr Baigent.

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no manner man be so hardy to touch the box or vessel the which the precious Sacrament is in, upon the same pain aforesaid.”\*

No doubt in allusion to this decree are the words in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*:†

Fortune is Bardolph’s foe, and frowns on him;  
For he hath stol’n a pyx, and hanged must a’ be.

Still more edifying is the will of Henry VII:

“Forasmuch as we have often, to our inward regret, seen in many churches of our Realm, the Holy Sacrament of the Altar kept in full simple and inhonest pyxes, specially pyxes of copper and timber, we have appointed the Treasurer of our Chamber and the Master of our Jewel House to cause to be made forthwith pyxes of silver and gilt in a great number, for the keeping of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, after the fashion of a pyx that we have caused to be delivered to them, every of the said pyxes to be of the value of four pounds, garnished with our arms and red roses, and portcullises crowned, of the which pyxes we will, that to the laud and service of God, the weal of our soul, and for a perpetual memory of us, every house of the four orders of Friars, and likewise every parish church within this our realm, not having a pyx or some other honest vessel of silver and gilt, nor of silver ungilded, for the keeping of the said Holy Sacrament, have of our gift in our life, one of the said pyxes, as soon as goodly may be done. And if this be not performed in part, or in all, in our life, we then will that it be performed by our executors within one year at the farthest of our decease.”‡

[A few supplementary remarks may here be added on the obscure subject of Eucharistic reservation in medieval England. To begin with, it seems desirable to quote *in extenso* the observations of the great canonist Lyndwood, whose words have already been alluded to above. Commenting on Archbishop Peckham’s constitution of 1281 that in every parish church there must be a decent tabernacle with a lock (*cum clausura*), Lyndwood remarks:

“You will find a similar prescription in *Extra. De Celeb. Missæ, Cap. ‘Sane’* (a reference to the *Corpus Juris, Decretalia*, bk III, tit. 41, cap. 10), where it is said that the Eucharist ought to be kept in a place set apart, clean, and marked out for that purpose. And from this it seems that the custom observed in England, viz., that It should hang over the altar in a canopy, is not to be commended, because it is against the intention of the above-mentioned *Cap. ‘Sane,’* which prescribes that It should be reserved, not in an open place, but in one set apart (*non in loco patenti sed singulari*). For although the English custom is praiseworthy from this point of view, that the Blessed Sacrament is more readily brought before our eyes that we may adore It, still it is not praiseworthy, in so far as It is kept in a public place where presumptuous hands§ may easily be put forth to seize It. For although It hangs in a cup (*cupa*) which is perhaps closed, still presumptuous hands may easily draw near to let down the vessel, or even to carry the whole away cup and all. And for this reason, in my opinion, the custom of other places which I have seen is more to be commended; for instance, in Holland or Portugal, in which a separate and becoming place is appointed close to the altar, where the Blessed Eucharist is deposited, to be kept under lock and key, either in the wall itself

\* Bentley’s *Excerpta Historica*, p. 30.

† Act III, sc. 6.

‡ *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 33.

§ The phrase *manus temerariæ* contains an allusion to the decree of the Fourth Council of Lateran, 1215,

which runs: “Statuimus ut in cunctis ecclesiis chrisma et eucharistia sub fideli custodia clavibus adhibitis conserventur, ne possit ad illa temeraria manus extendi ad aliqua horribilia vel nefaria exercenda.” *Conc. Lateran IV*, c. 20, *Harduin VII*, p. 35.



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or in some secure receptacle, so that no one can get at the Sacred Species save only the priest of the parish, who keeps the key."

Lyndwood remarks further in another note that according to Peckham's constitution the pyx and the tabernacle are clearly meant to be distinct things, and that the pyx is to be kept inside the tabernacle. Father Bridgett is no doubt right in regarding this evidence as establishing conclusively the almost universal prevalence of "suspension" for reserving the Eucharist in this country during the fifteenth century. It is also clear that Lyndwood thought that by *tabernaculum* Peckham meant a box or cupboard, but in Father Bridgett's view Lyndwood was probably here mistaken in his interpretation. On this point there is more evidence to justify Lyndwood than Father Bridgett seems to have perceived. In the first place Peckham's own phrase *ut in qualibet ecclesia parochiali "fiat" tabernaculum cum clausura decens et honestum* seems to exclude the idea of a mere cup or metal receptacle. This language about a tabernacle being *made* seems to imply something which would form part of the fabric of the church or which would at least be a fixture. Further this interpretation is very strongly borne out by a reference in the synodal decrees of Bishop Quivil of Exeter, drawn up in 1287, or only six years after those of Archbishop Peckham. We find there mentioned among the requisites which ought to be provided in every parish church *sacramentarium lapideum et immobile*.<sup>\*</sup> This phrase, at least, is open to no ambiguity. It must mean "a fixed sacrament cupboard of stone," and it may be compared with the mention of a *baptisterium lapideum bene seratum* (a stone font with a good lock) which occurs a few lines lower down. It seems, therefore, to the present writer that unless we are prepared to believe that the decrees both of Peckham and Quivil remained absolutely a dead letter from the first, there must at one time in England have been a certain number of Eucharistic receptacles of stone—Sacrament Houses, as they were called in Scotland after the German fashion at a later date—though most probably they were constructed, not over the High Altar, but in the wall of the chancel or in the sacristy. For this reason we must not, perhaps, too peremptorily reject the suggestion of those who are inclined to believe that the recesses with traces of hinges not infrequently found in the chancel walls of pre-Reformation churches may have been cupboards intended for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament along with the holy oils. It is even possible that some of the exceptionally diminutive orifices in the outer wall which have hitherto been commonly classed with low side windows, may have been only what some continental scholars are accustomed to call an *oculus*, i.e., an aperture through which the Blessed Sacrament reserved in a recess on the inner side was conceived to look out upon the church yard.<sup>†</sup> Lastly, attention may be called to an interesting though somewhat confused story of a gang of thieves who, in 1467, seem to have been engaged in stealing pyxes, or to use the chronicler's own phrase, "the boxys with the sacrament," from various London churches. The thieves believed that these boxes would prove to be "sylvyr ovyr-gylt," but they discovered, in fact, that they were only copper. The criminals were brought to justice through the reckless boast of one of their number (possibly a Lollard in sympathy) who said, "I have ete ix goddys at my sopyr that were in the boxys." One of the gang, shocked at this shameless impiety, believed that he had received a supernatural warning through his inability to see the Host at the Elevation of the Mass, and was thus led to make open confession of all that had occurred.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Wilkins, *Concilia*, II, p. 139.

<sup>†</sup> See Kraus, *Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass Lothringen*, III, p. 243; Mallet, *Cours Élémentaire d'Archéologie*

*religieuse*, p. 197; Kraus, *Kunstgeschichte*, II, p. 466.

<sup>‡</sup> See William Gregory's *Chronicle of London*, Camden Society, N.S., vol. XVII, p. 234.

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## CHAPTER V. CHURCHES AND ALTARS

**J**UST as one sees in chalices and vestments, in liturgy and ceremonial, a proof of the belief of our forefathers in the Real Presence, so we may find in churches, the veneration paid to them and the riches poured forth in their decoration, another still more striking testimony to the mystery of the Holy Eucharist—indeed, they are so many acts of faith commemorated in stone, like that set up by Moses to testify to the truth of his mission when he himself had passed away.

It has always been the rule in the Catholic Church that the holy sacrifice of the Mass should be celebrated on a consecrated altar and within a consecrated building. Only in very exceptional circumstances has it been permitted to dispense with the altar, as in the prisons of the primitive martyrs, when the altar was the hands or even the breast of the sufferers for CHRIST. To celebrate on an altar, but outside a consecrated building, has been often permitted for less urgent reasons, though it has always been an exception or a privilege.

I have not found any instances of Mass having been said without an altar in England. Among the decisions given by Archbishop Theodore, in answer to certain questions proposed to him, decisions which are rather solutions of cases of conscience belonging to the seventh century than canonical decrees for future times, occurs the following: *Licet in campo . . . presbitero missas agere si diaconus vel presbiter ipse calicem et oblationem manibus tenuerit*.<sup>\*</sup> Here at first sight it might seem that no altar is required; but does it not rather mean that Mass may be celebrated in the open air if the priest or deacon holds the chalice and the host *with*, and not in, his hands (*manibus tenuerit*), to prevent them from being moved by gusts of wind?

No doubt, before the building of churches, the first missionaries often said Mass beneath a tent or in a tabernacle of boughs, like St Germanus, or in the houses of their hosts when preaching in a village, but on these occasions they used a portable altar. We read, too, of Masses being offered on certain spots of holy or mournful memory. Thus Venerable Bede tells us how St Oswald, when seeking to win back the kingdom of Northumbria from Cadwallon the Briton, erected a wooden cross at Heavenfield, near Hexham, before which he and all his army knelt in prayer. To this prayer a victory was granted, which led to the establishment of the faith throughout that province. Oswald was slain in battle some years later, fighting against the pagan Penda, but the monks of Hexham used to go to Heavenfield on the vigil of the anniversary of his death and sing the office of the dead (*vigiliæ mortuorum*) for the repose of his soul, and the following morning the holy sacrifice was offered for the same end (*victimam pro eo mane sacræ oblationis offerre*). There was a peculiar propriety in this, since St Oswald was said to have fallen on the field of battle uttering the words: “God have mercy on the souls of my soldiers!”<sup>†</sup>

A somewhat similar act of piety is related by Ingulf. During the devastations of the Danes in the ninth century, Theodore, Abbot of Croyland, and his aged monks, and the children of the monastery, had been all fearfully butchered at the very altar and during the celebration of the holy mysteries. The impious pagans had then gone to Medeshamstede, now Peter-

<sup>\*</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, III, 191.

<sup>†</sup> Bede, III, 2. Alban Butler places Maserfield, the scene of his last battle, at Winwick, near St Helen's, in

Lancashire. Others are in favour of Oswestry, in Shropshire. But in neither case could the monks of Hexham pray at his grave.



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borough, where Hubba the Danish king, after besieging and taking the monastery, slaughtered with his own hand the abbot and eighty-three monks. Godric, the successor of Theodore at Croyland, not only reverently paid the debt of piety to his own abbot and former brethren, but also carefully buried the mangled bodies of the monks of Medeshamstede. The rest of the history may be given in the words of Dr Lingard, which are a free translation of Ingulf. "To perpetuate their memory, Godric placed over their grave a small pyramid of stone, on which was rudely engraved the history of this bloody catastrophe; and opposite to the pyramid he raised a cross, on which was engraved the image of CHRIST. The public road lay between them, and the pious abbot hoped that the presence of the crucifix would prevent travellers from profaning so sacred a spot, and that the figures on the monument would induce them to offer a prayer for those whose ashes reposed beneath it. During the rest of his life these victims of Danish barbarity were seldom absent from his recollection. Yearly, on the anniversary of the massacre, he visited the cemetery, pitched his tent over the grave, and spent two days in celebrating Masses and performing other devotions to which Catholic charity has attributed the power of benefiting the souls of the departed."\*

It was allowed then, under circumstances like the above, to celebrate the holy rite outside a consecrated building; and indeed there is, in a Pontifical of Archbishop Egbert preserved in Paris, a special Mass called *Missa in Cimiterio*, which seems to show that on certain anniversaries Mass could be said even in a churchyard.†

Another exception was also authorized. Mass could be celebrated in the apartment of a dying person. The thirtieth of the canons called Dunstan's or Edgar's, of the year 967, says: "We declare that no priest may celebrate in any house which is not a consecrated church, except on account of some one's grievous sickness;" and in 970 the twenty-fifth of the canons of Ælfric decrees that "Mass must not be said except in consecrated places, unless under a great necessity or in a last sickness."‡ The reasons of such a prohibition are evident enough. That it was sometimes evaded or disregarded is proved from the testimony of William of Malmesbury, an unprejudiced writer, who lived near enough to the times that he described to be well informed on this subject. In his description of the decline of piety and luxury of manners which preceded the Norman Conquest, he tells us that the English nobles, instead of going to the church, would have a hurried Mass said in their chamber by their chaplains, before they rose from bed.§ We must remember, however, that a few examples of such things get easily exaggerated, as if they were a common custom, especially by a painter of morals who is in search of dark colours for his picture.

Let us now consider the nature of these churches and altars, and of their consecration to God. When Pope St Gregory first heard of the success of St Augustine's preaching, he wrote to King Ethelbert to destroy the temples of his gods.|| Afterwards in a letter to St Mellitus he says that the temples must not be destroyed, but only the idols, and that when the temples have

\**History of Anglo-Saxons*, II, 214. Though the history which goes under the name of Ingulf is now generally admitted to be the work of a later writer, and in some respects a forgery, yet, as Mr Freeman remarks, "whoever did write it may have worked in some stories from the old traditions and records of the Abbey." (*Old Eng. Hist.*, p. 111.)

† It is printed by Dr Rock, vol. III, p. 14. [It seems a

little doubtful whether this was originally intended to be anything more than the Mass said on occasion of the dedication of the cemetery.]

‡ These canons are printed by Spelman and Wilkins.

§ Guil. Mal. *De Gestis reg. Angl.*; Mat. Paris, *Hist.*, p. 5 (ed. Wats.)

|| *S. Greg. Epist.* XI, 66.

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been sprinkled with holy water, and altars built in them and relics brought, they may then be used for Christian rites.\* But as such temples probably were not numerous, and for their construction or associations were not considered desirable by the missionaries, great efforts were made, as we have seen, to erect oratories and churches throughout the land. Into the history of the structure and endowment of these I need not enter, for it has been well investigated by Dr Lingard and other writers.† Many were at first mere log huts, and timber churches remained here and there in remote country places until the Norman Conquest and even later. Yet Bede shows us that in more important places stone churches were constructed at the very outset. Blæcca, the prefeet of Lincoln, built a stone church of great beauty (*egregii operis*).‡ St Bennet Biscop is renowned for bringing workmen from Gaul skilled in building, decoration and working in glass and metal. St Aldhelm, St Egwin, St Wilfrid, in the seventh century, vied with one another in erecting handsome churches at Malmesbury, Worcester, Hexham, York and Ripon. No art or expense was spared in making the interiors of the greater churches as splendid as possible; and did we not remember the immense plunder which must have been taken from the conquered Britons by the ancestors of these new Christians, we should be utterly at a loss to know whence came all the gold and silver and precious stones which their piety poured out upon the altars. Chalices, patens, crosses of pure gold and of silver gilt, vestments and hangings of the most costly texture were given by kings and queens and nobles.§ As evidence of the faith and piety of the donors some of these gifts will be hereafter recorded; but I will confine myself at present to the rites and prayers by which the churches, whether rich or poor in material construction, were set apart for the service of God.

Substantially these were the same throughout Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries as they are now in the nineteenth. Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Rheims and a disciple of our Alcuin, at the beginning of the ninth century, describes minutely the consecration of a church. The substance of his description is as follows. The preceding night relics of saints were brought to a tent in the churchyard, and solemn vigils were kept around them with psalms and prayers. The next morning they were carried by priests processionally to the church, the procession first making on the outside of the church three circuits of the building. Twelve lights were placed inside around the walls; the altars were sprinkled with holy water and anointed with chrism, and on them incense was burnt; relics were placed under the altar slabs; and lastly solemn Mass was sung.|| We have still in existence the Office used in England in this sacred ceremony as early as the time of Venerable Bede, viz., in the Pontifical of Egbert. It abounds with the most exquisite prayers. After the procession of relics and the singing of the Litany of the Saints, the consecrating bishop chanted the following invocation: "O blessed and holy Trinity, who purifiest, cleanseest and adornest all things; O blessed Majesty of God, who fillest, governest and disposest all things; O blessed and holy hand of God, who sanctifiest, blessest and enrichest all things; O God, the Holy of Holies, we humbly implore Thy clemency, that by our ministry Thou

\* *Ib.* xi, 76.

† On the structure of Anglo-Saxon churches see Lingard, *A. S.* ii, note C; on their endowment, i, ch. 6 and note I. On their interior arrangement consult Dr Rock, i, 190 sq.

‡ Bede, ii, 16.

§ Innumerable examples will be found in the pages of Dr Rock. I may say that his four volumes are almost a catalogue of the riches and splendours of ancient churches, from the days of Ethelbert to those of Henry VIII.

|| *De Clericorum Instit.* ii, 45.



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wouldst purify, bless, and consecrate this church to the honour of the holy and victorious Cross and the memory of Thy blessed servant N. Here may Thy priests offer to Thee sacrifices of praise; here may Thy faithful people perform their vows; here may the burden of sins be lightened, and those who have fallen be restored to grace. Grant that all who shall enter this temple to pray may obtain the effect of their petition, and rejoice for ever in the bounty of Thy mercy. Amen.”\* The baptistery, often a separate building, had a special blessing. At the same time many objects belonging to the church were set apart to the service of God by prayer, but especially the altar with its furniture.

The altar was considered by the Saxons, as by the Britons before them, as “the seat of the heavenly sacrifice,” that for which and by which the church was sanctified. In his description of the consecration of Ripon by St Wilfrid, Eddi gives special prominence to the high altar—*altare cum basibus suis Domino dedicantes, purpurâque auro textâ induentes*†—“the altar together with its supports was consecrated to the LORD, and then decked with a purple covering interwoven with gold,” before the holy Mass was offered. Here Eddi distinguishes between the altar-table itself and the substructure on which it was laid. The latter could be a solid mass of stone or wood, or the altar-slab might be made to rest on one or more pillars, or on brackets. The side altars, built against pillars or in oratories and recesses, were often very small. The shape was sometimes square, but more generally an oblong parallelogram, as at the present day. Superalters, i.e., the step or steps at the back of the altar (*gradini*), were not in use; and the name superaltar in medieval documents is to be understood of a portable altar-stone.‡ Whether movable or fixed, the altar-slab, or altar properly so called, was regularly of stone, and, unless it were such, it was forbidden to consecrate it with holy chrism. *Altaria nisi lapidea chrismatis unguine non consecrentur*.§ But these words show that wooden or metal altars at that period were still occasionally used.

The altar was called in Anglo-Saxon *weofod*, in old English *weuede* or *weved*. “GODES table is the woyeued,” says Dan Michel in the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, The altar is also sometimes called God’s board, and this phrase is especially (though not exclusively) used when reference is made to Holy Communion. “I charge you in God’s name,” says the homilist in the Festival, “that none of you come thus to God’s board, but if ye be in perfect love and charity, and be clean shriven, and in full purpose to leave your sin.” “He used of God’s board,” i.e., he communicated from the LORD’s table, is an expression in an old poem, and another, referring to both Mass and communion, says, “Richard at God’s board his Mass had and his rights.”|| But the much more usual designation of the place of sacrifice was the altar, or, as it was formerly written and pronounced, *auter*.

The substructure of the altar was plain, not carved or decorated, and it was covered with a frontal. Hence, when stripped on Good Friday, it did not by its splendour contrast with the mournful appearance of the church, but well

\* *Pont. Egbert* (Surtees Society). [In the *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, edited by Mr H. A. Wilson in 1903, for the Henry Bradshaw Society, we have another Anglo-Saxon Pontifical agreeing closely for the most part with that of Egbert. Cf. also the editorial notes attached to this latter edition.] In the first vol. of the *Historians of York* (Rolls Series, 1879) there is an account of the consecration of Ripon by St Wilfrid at p. 25, and of Ramsey by St Oswald at p. 464.

† Eddi, *Vita S. Wilfridi*, cap. 16.

‡ A ledge or shelf was sometimes made on the high altar at a later period. It is called a form, a kalpas, or a desk, in documents of the sixteenth century. See *Archæol. Journal*, vol. xxxv, p. 384.

§ *Excerptiones Egberti*, apud Thorpe, p. 104. Though not Egbert’s, these are ancient canons.

|| See these and other examples given by Canon Simmons in the *Lay Folks’ Mass Book*, p. 359. “La sainte table” is constantly used in this sense in French, as well as “sacra mensa,” or “mensa DOMINI,” in Latin.

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symbolized our LORD's Body as It hung naked on the Cross.\* As the frontals could be changed, the altar was capable of great adornment on the festivals; and not only rich stuffs, but also embossed plates of gold and silver, were hung around it. According to St Theodore there were to be no steps before the altar.† This prohibition was derived from the Old Testament, and, as it had in reality no reference to the circumstances of the Christian sacrifice, was in course of time disregarded.

There were often many altars in a church. A poem, written about the year 725, mentions fourteen,‡ and another of the same century by Alcuin tells us there were thirty in the cathedral church of York:

Quæ triginta tenet variis ornatibus aras.§

Beneath the present church of Ripon are still to be seen chambers and passages which once formed part of the crypt of St Wilfrid's abbey church, and which illustrate what is said by an old writer in describing the ancient cathedral of Hexham, that many priests and separate groups of worshippers could offer and assist at Mass without being visible to each other.||

"Besides the undercroft, the triforium or gallery running all round the church over the aisles or 'porticus' had many small chapels with an altar in each of them, built in the upper part of the church."¶

There was, however, always one principal or high altar standing towards the east end of the church, and this was distinguished not only by size, position and splendour, but also by two other peculiarities. It stood in a part of the church reserved for the clergy and separated from the body of the building by a low rail, called cancelli; and it was surmounted by a ciborium, or dome resting on pillars. It appears that in the early Saxon monastery of Abingdon the monks, twelve in number, had each his own chapel, and only on Sundays and festivals was the Mass celebrated at the high altar.\*\*

Dr Rock seems to say that the altars were always so built that the priest celebrating turned eastward; †† and certainly this is true of the high altar, for the church itself was almost invariably built so that the presbytery was at its eastern extremity. Yet Walafrid Strabo expressly states that the altar might be built towards any point of the compass, though the more common or fitting position was towards the east.‡‡ Still, whatever was the position of the priest, he was in no case supposed to be reading prayers to the people, but addressing them to God. He had, therefore, his back turned towards most of the worshippers gathered round his altar, and taking part with him in the sacrifice.

The altar received a special and most solemn consecration, and this rite was reserved to the bishop. On the altar-slab five or sometimes even nine crosses were cut, one of which was in the centre. These crosses were anointed with holy oil, and on them incense was burnt. The prayers used in these

\* Rock, I, 233 sq.

† Haddan and Stubbs, III, 191.

‡ Among the works of St Aldhelm; Migne, tom. LXXXIX, col. 289.

§ *De Pontif. Eccl. Ebor.* l. 1513. Alcuin gives here a detailed account of the church built in York by Archbishop Albert, and its altars, candelabra, and crosses of gold and silver.

|| Describing the church built by St Acca in 710. In Bolland, *Acta SS.* tom. LVI, p. 969.

¶ Rock, I, 231.

\*\* *Historia de Abingdon*, I, 273 (Rolls Series).

†† Rock, I, 220. In Christ Church, Canterbury, there was an apse at the west as well as at the east end, and in each apse an altar. In the western apse, while the people knelt looking westward, the priest celebrated so as to look east and face the people. But this was peculiar. [This basilica arrangement in which the celebrant faced the people instead of turning his back to them was probably not so peculiar as is here suggested. See G. Baldwin Brown, *From Schola to Cathedral*, and the same writer's *Arts in Early England*.]

‡‡ Walafridus Strabo, *De rebus eccl.*, Migne, tom. cxiv, p. 92.



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ceremonies expressed in the strongest language belief in the Real Presence of our LORD and in the holy sacrifice, as well as the dispositions which should belong to the celebrant and the worshippers.\* I select one for translation: "O holy LORD, O clement FATHER, in whom neither beginning nor end is found, who art as great as is Thy will to be, holy and wonderful GOD, whom the universe cannot contain: we bless Thee, and suppliantly implore that this altar may be to Thee like that which Abel, in figure of the mystery of our salvation, being slain by his own brother and so Thy precursor in his passion, sprinkled and consecrated with his own blood. Let this altar be to Thee, O LORD, like that which Abraham our father raised, when it was given him to see Thee in vision, and like that on which Melchisedech expressed in figure the sacrifice of triumph. Let this altar be to Thee, O LORD, like that on which Abraham, the pattern of our faith, laid his son Isaac, believing in Thee with his whole heart, and on which the mystery of salvation in the passion of our LORD was shown forth, when a son was offered and a lamb was slain. Let this altar be to Thee, O LORD, like that which Isaac, having found a well of deep clear water to which he gave the name of Abundance, dedicated to Thy Majesty.† Let this altar be to Thee, O LORD, like that stone which Jacob had placed beneath his head, when in his dream he saw angels ascending and descending on the mysterious ladder. Let this altar be to Thee, O LORD, like that which Moses, when he had received Thy law, built up of twelve stones in type of the Apostles. Let this altar be to Thee, O LORD, like that which Moses cleansed with a purification of seven days and dedicated to Thy heavenly invocation (*alloquio*), as Thou Thyself didst say to him: 'If anyone touch this altar, let him be sanctified.' On this altar, then, let luxury be slain, let all lust cease, and instead of pigeons let there be offered the sacrifice of chastity, and for the young of doves a sacrifice of innocence. Through our LORD JESUS CHRIST," etc.‡

There was one custom in the consecration of altars which is no longer observed, and has given rise to foolish, and worse than foolish, remarks on the part of some Protestant controversialists. A council of all the bishops of the province of Canterbury, held under Archbishop Wulfred in 816 at Celchyth, in its second canon decrees as follows: "When a church is built, it must be consecrated by the bishop of the diocese. The water must be blessed by him and sprinkled, and the other ceremonies completed, as contained in the book" (the Pontifical). "Afterwards the Eucharist, which is consecrated by the bishop at the time (or for that purpose, *per idem ministerium*), together with other relics, is enclosed in a box, and will be kept in the basilica. And if he cannot obtain other relics, nevertheless this alone will be of the greatest advantage, since it is the Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."§

It may be thought from the above words that the Holy Eucharist, thus enclosed in a box with relics, was to be kept for use in the church. But from other sources,|| and especially from the very Pontifical of Egbert¶ referred

\* See Gage, *Ordo ad dedicandam Eccl.*, published in *Archæologia*, vol. xv. Other prayers, though not that which I have translated, are given by Rock, i, 104; Lingard, ii, 34. † Gen. xxvi, 25, 33.

‡ From Egbert's *Pontifical*, published by Surtees Society.

§ Haddan and Stubbs, iii, 580. "Tamen hoc maxime proficere potest, quia corpus et sanguis est DOMINI nostri JESU CHRISTI."

|| See Rock, i, 40; also Chardon, *Histoire des Sacrements*.

¶ "Deinde ponit tres portiones corporis Domini intus in confessione, et tres de incenso, et recluduntur intus reliquæ." [From the Celtic Tract preserved in the *Lebar Brech* it would seem that relics were not used in the consecration of an altar according to the Celtic rite, but there is a peculiar passage about "the host, the water and the wine" being "mixed together in one vessel and consecrated according to the rite of consecration in the Bishop's book." See *Transactions of St Paul's Eccles. Soc.* iv, p. 102.]

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to by the fathers at Celchyth, it is certain that the box was placed beneath the altar-table, there to remain permanently.

The reason of this canon is thus given by Dr Rock: "Living, as they did, on the uttermost bounds of Christendom, far away from the land of the martyrs, though, whenever they went beyond the sea to Italy or the East, they always strove to bring home some relics of the saints, yet it was not at all times easy for the Anglo-Saxon bishops to find at hand such hallowed treasures to deposit under the newly raised altar, or within the church just built, as ecclesiastical usage directed. In this dearth of relics at a period when they were young as a Christian nation, and therefore could not boast of many homeborn saints, what were the Anglo-Saxons to do? Their unhalting faith soon taught them to seek in the Eucharist—what was far above the holiest saint's body or the boldest martyr's blood—the body of the Saint of saints, of their Redeemer and their God Himself, CHRIST JESUS." Dr Rock, who rightly considers this practice as a proof of the belief of the Anglo-Saxons in transubstantiation, was probably not aware of the language used on this subject by certain Protestants; who infer that "the Eucharistic symbols are here set upon a level with the relics of saints, and *scarce that neither.*" But Archbishop Wulfred and his brother bishops had distinctly said, when giving leave for the use of the Eucharist: "And this may especially avail, since it is the Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." And that their meaning was that the living Body of the Son of GOD was more than a substitute for the dead bodies of His martyrs, it is easy to show from the book referred to in that very canon. The bishop prayed to GOD that He would "accept the adorable Victim that would lie there, and would grant life to all who should partake of that Victim" (*ut super illud altare adorandam Filii sui hostiam Ipse benedicat impositam, Ipse suscipiat consecrandam*); and again that He "would transmute by his invisible power the elements selected for the sacrifice into the Body and Blood of the Redeemer and cause the nature of the offering to pass into the substance of the Word"; besides much more to the same purpose. To complete this part of the subject I will add that St Anselm having been consulted as to whether, when an altar is moved, it has to be consecrated again, replied that "all are agreed that if the principal altar is violated, the whole church, together with the altars, must be reconsecrated, and that a church cannot be consecrated unless either the high altar or some other altar is consecrated with it. But if the altar remain unmoved and a part of the church be destroyed or added, the new part has only to be sprinkled with water blessed by the bishop. And the reason of this is that the *altar is not for the church, but the church for the altar.*"\* St Boniface also taught that a priest must not erect a second altar in a consecrated church without getting it consecrated by the bishop.† Not only was every church dedicated to Almighty GOD under the invocation of a saint, but each altar was called by the name of a saint, whose memory it served to recall. On or near the altar was inscribed the name of the saint to whom it was dedicated.‡

It may perhaps amuse the reader in the midst of these details if I here record, in connexion with the subject of the dedication of churches, an example of the way in which some persons study archæology, as we have just had a specimen of the study of canon law. It seems that the Rev. J. Corbel Anderson conceived the praiseworthy idea of looking into the history of the

\* S. Anselm, *Op.* tom. II, p. 135; *Ep.* l. III, n. 161.

† *Opera* apud Migne, tom. LXXXIX, p. 821.

‡ Council of Celchyth. Haddan and Stubbs, III, 580; Rock, I, 228.



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old Catholic Church of Croydon, of which he was appointed the Protestant vicar. He naturally had recourse to the Domesday Book drawn up at the Conquest. In Surrey, he tells us, he finds sixty churches mentioned. Of these sixteen are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, eight to St Peter, four to St Nicholas, and so on. Then comes his own reflection, which is as follows: "This list is useful, inasmuch as it implies the corrupt state into which the Church of CHRIST had fallen at the period when these structures were named. With such a list beside us, no need is there to turn to books of ecclesiastical history to ascertain whether or not during the Middle Ages the bright light of the Gospel was obscured, for here we have sermons in stones. Instead of seeking pardon through the atonement and intercession of the sole Mediator between God and man, the sinner, ill informed of the way of salvation, placed himself under the tutelary guardianship of the Virgin Mary, St Peter and All Saints. *Amid this series of appellations the sacred name of CHRIST does not appear.*"\* If the writer of this new homily on the peril of idolatry had consulted the service for the dedication of churches used by their Anglo-Saxon founders, which was quite as accessible to him as the Domesday Book, he might have read the prayer, given a few pages back, which was used by the bishop when the church was named. He would have seen in what beautiful language the ever-blessed Trinity was implored "to bless and consecrate the church, to the honour of the holy and victorious Cross, and the memory of thy blessed servant N." He would have found also that the very purpose for which the church was consecrated was to make the perpetual bloodless commemoration, commanded by our LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself, of His sacred Passion; and then, looking more narrowly into the history of his church, he might have found that before the pictures of the saints were whitewashed over by Elizabeth, there stretched across the church a rood screen with an image of our LORD, that all might remember and love their Redeemer. And he would have learnt how all the roods throughout England were pulled down and burnt by the first bishops of his own reformed church, while the lion and unicorn were set up instead. In a word, he would soon have discovered unmistakable evidence that in the Middle Ages the doctrine of the atonement by our LORD JESUS CHRIST was known from the king to the bondsman with a familiarity to which the majority of the English poor are, alas! now utter strangers.†

But the two objections which have been quoted in this chapter are instructive, inasmuch as they show the animus by which so many are possessed to calumniate their forefathers. How much more beautiful was the spirit of William of Malmesbury, who, writing in the century after the Norman conquest and making a review of Anglo-Saxon history, delights to record evidences of piety, though he has no care to hide faults! Amongst other passages there is one bearing on the present subject of the dedication of churches. It is as follows: "At their first coming into Britain they (the Angles and Saxons) were barbarians in appearance and reality, given up to war and fanatical rites. But afterwards when they had received the faith of CHRIST, by degrees, as time went on, they relegated warlike exercises to the second

\* *Croydon Ch., Past and Present*, J. C. Anderson, p. 17

† There may still be seen round the nave of Almonbury Church, in Yorkshire, some English verses (date 1522) which, though rude, are devout:—

"Thou man unkind, Have in thy mind  
My bloody face,

My woundes wide, On every side  
For thy trespass.

Thou sinner hard, Turn hitherward,  
Behold thy Saviour free (*i.e.* bountiful);  
Unkind thou art From me to depart,  
And mercy I would grant thee."

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place, and gave all their attention to religion. I refer to their kings, who might have indulged in pleasure uncontrolled, yet some of them in their own country, and some in Rome, put aside their royal robes for the dress of monks, and by a blessed exchange gained a heavenly kingdom. Many others, in outward appearance only belonging to the world, poured out their wealth for the relief of the poor and the foundation of monasteries. And what shall I say of so many bishops, hermits, abbots? Did not the whole island shine with so many relics of its own native inhabitants, that you can scarcely pass through any considerable village without hearing the name of some new saint? And of how many more has the memory perished from the lack of historians?"\*

But to continue and conclude this subject, since a church was a building solemnly set apart for the celebration of the most holy mysteries, placed under the invocation of a saint, and believed, as St Gregory and St Bede often say, to be the resort of holy angels, who come to worship their hidden God, it was but natural that it should be kept free not only from what was sinful, but also from what was out of harmony with the worship of God. "It cannot be doubted," writes Venerable Bede, "that where the mysteries of our LORD's Body and Blood are enacted (*geruntur*) there are assemblies of the heavenly citizens, since they guarded with such watchful vigils the tomb where once His venerable Body had been placed, though He had risen from it and departed." Let these words of this great doctor of the English of the seventh century be noted by those who would persuade themselves that the Anglo-Saxons placed the Holy Eucharist on the same level as the relics of saints. Bede argues that if angels guarded the tomb where the Body of our LORD had once lain but was no longer present, much more must they honour and guard the church where that Body is present. Surely, if words have any meaning, he is speaking of the same Body that lay in the tomb, and not of "Eucharistic symbols." "Therefore," continues the venerable writer, "we must, brethren, be very careful, when we enter a church either to pay our debt of praise to God, or to offer holy Mass" (*ad agenda missarum solemnia*), "always to remember the presence of the angels, and so to perform our heavenly duties with fear and reverence in imitation of those devout women who, when the angels showed themselves at the tomb, are related to have feared and cast down their eyes to the earth."†

To maintain due reverence in and about the house of God, in spite of the little faith or rude manners of the people, was the frequent solicitude of the bishops in council. One of the canons of St Dunstan in 967 says: "Let priests keep their churches with all honourable care for their divine ministry and for the pure service of God and nothing else. Let them allow nothing unfitting (*quid superflui*) either inside or near them. Let there be no vain talking or unbecoming act. This is no place for disorderly drinking, nor for any kind of vanity. Dogs must be kept out of the churchyard, and no more swine allowed to feed there than their keeper can control."‡

From a story related by Reginald of Durham we may gather with what ceremonies people were then accustomed to enter a consecrated church. He tells us how St Cuthbert, appearing in vision to a young nobleman, instructed him not to go into the church with pomp and head erect, but, "*as is the custom of Christians*, when you come to the door of the church kneel down,

\* *De gestis reg. Angl.* III.

† S. Bede, *Homil.* apud Martene, *Thesaurus Anec.* t. v., p. 360

‡ Spelman, I, 447; Wilkins, I, 225.



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kiss the threshold, the doorposts and doors, and then make the sign of the cross with three fingers of the right hand.”\*

In order to impress the people with reverence for our LORD, a certain regard was had even to materials which had once belonged to a consecrated church. The Penitential of Archbishop Theodore of the seventh century says:† “Wood which has been part of a church may be used only in building another church or a monastery, or it must be burned. It may be used to bake bread, but not for other lay works.”

Having spoken in this chapter of churches and the altars within them, I must here add that portable altars or movable altar-stones were not unknown in early times. An example was mentioned in a former chapter in relating the martyrdom of the two Hewalds, who daily offered the saving Victim, using “a consecrated board” as an altar-slab. These portable altars were called *altaria gestatoria* and also *superaltaria*, because they were occasionally used even in a church, being placed on an unconsecrated wooden altar structure. By no other means could Mass, as we have seen was sometimes the custom, be said outside a consecrated building, since it was forbidden to say Mass without a consecrated altar. Perhaps it was only of those to be used inside a church that St Anselm spoke when he said that, though he knew such altars were consecrated by bishops in Normandy, he would neither blame them nor imitate them.‡ These portable altars were sometimes made of precious materials, as jet or jasper, and were covered with plates of gold or silver. They were also set in a frame for greater security.§ When the altar, whether portable or fixed, was used for the holy sacrifice, it was covered with at least three altar-cloths of linen. But of the rites of Mass I shall speak in another chapter.

It may be said that the churches of Great Britain, considered as works of art and science, have been plentifully illustrated by pen and pencil, but that as works of zeal and devotion they still await an historian. And there are few problems more worthy of study—none the solution of which would more redound to the honour of our forefathers—than that of the resources which not merely covered the land with cathedrals and abbeys, the wonder and admiration of the world, but gave to every little hamlet its church, often plain and humble, more often handsome, but always more than sufficient for the population.

After the most painstaking study of the churches of the mountainous and once almost roadless county of Derbyshire, Mr Cox speaks|| with admiration of “the bountiful provision of medieval England,” and notices that “even within the limited area of the hundreds of Appleton, and of Repton and Gresley, upwards of a score of churches and chapels, which have completely disappeared, were then open to the worship of the faithful.” Sir Richard

\* *Libellus de virtutibus B. Cuthberti*, p. 258 (Surtees Society, 1835). † Haddan and Stubbs, III, 190.

‡ “Quod ego non damno, nec tamen facere volo.” —*Epist.* III, 159.

§ For further information on this subject see Rock, I, 250. There is also an article going over much the same ground in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. IV, pp. 243–248. Such a portable altar is called, in the Decretals, *Viaticum*. See Bened. XIV. *De Sacrific. Missæ*, L. I, 2. [Two famous portable altars of English origin are still preserved to us. The first was found in the tomb of St Cuthbert and is now in the capitular library at Durham. It consists of a small block of oak

originally encased in silver, but only a small portion of this casing now remains. Upon the oak may be read the words, *In honor. S. Petru* (sic), and it is, consequently, one of the earliest monuments of English devotion to St Peter. The broken remains of the silver covering seem also to have preserved the words, *Petrus Apostolus*. See Raine’s *St Cuthbert*, p. 201. The other altar, that of St Willibrord, is preserved at Treves. The altar itself consists of a thin slab of porphyry, but it has been encased in a shrine of 11th century workmanship. See Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, Vol. V, pp. 7, 11 and 21. Plates 340 and 347.]

|| *Notes on Derbyshire Churches*, vol. III, Introd. p. 9.

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Hoare, a writer by no means unfavourable to the Reformation, in his *History of Wiltshire*, remarks, that "whatever doubts may be entertained as to the merits or demerits of the monastic orders, it is at least undeniable that the wanton destruction of so many of the capacious and magnificent churches belonging to those establishments was a national injury. From hence was derived that want of church accommodation which later ages have in vain attempted to remedy, and which may be reckoned among the most efficient causes of the dissent too justly urged as a reproach against the Church of England."\* Similar reflections have been suggested to candid inquirers, not merely by the history of churches now destroyed, but by the fate of those that survive. "It is at Wells," says Sir Harris Nicolas, in his *Life of Bishop Beckington*, "that the lover of the arts and the admirer of the zeal and disinterestedness of the prelates of the Middle Ages will be most impressed with respect for Bishop Beckington; but whilst viewing the effects of his munificence, will he be able to refrain from asking himself why it is that the most opulent successors of those great men have so rarely imitated them? Will his respect for the established order of things be sufficient to repress the reflection, that with nearly the same revenues the modern clergy seldom indeed beautify or repair cathedrals or found colleges? . . . Whether this neglect of what are termed 'The Temples of God' is indicative of greater zeal in His service than was felt by the reviled monkish priesthood, or whether the public, who are so commonly accused from the pulpit of indifference to their religious duties, are likely to become more strict observers of them, whilst the richly endowed hierarchy of England allow the venerable religious fabrics to fall to decay, may be a proper subject for consideration of the dignitaries of our Church."†

These severe words were written in 1828, and in the many years which have since passed much has been done to remove the reproach. This every Catholic gladly recognizes, since it is one of the hopeful signs which may be set against the spread of infidelity, as betokening a partial return at least to that piety which, by the grace of God, is the moral preparation for faith. The times are certainly changed since Pilkington, the first Protestant Bishop of Durham, in order to urge on Elizabeth's officers to defile Catholic churches and altars, wrote as follows: "Though Jehu was an evil man otherways, yet God gave him a worldly blessing and commended him for his earnest zeal in rooting out the posterity of Achab, pulling down Baal and his sacrificing priests, making a common jakes of the house where they worshipped him."‡ It must, however, be admitted that the republication of such language as this of late years, with the view of counteracting the movement of return towards the Church, is a sign that much remains to be done before sacrilege is repented of or its effects expiated.

Somewhat less offensive than Pilkington's, but quite as extraordinary, are the reflections made by Alexander Neville, secretary to Elizabeth's first Protestant archbishops, Parker and Grindal, when recording the works of the first Catholic Bishop of Norwich, Herbert de Losinga. Herbert has been accused of obtaining his bishopric from William Rufus by simoniacal gifts. That he did so is not certain; though he certainly felt scruples about having received investiture from the king, and therefore went to Rome and resigned his ring and crosier into the hands of the Pope, from whom he received them

\* *History of Wiltshire*, p. 241.

† *Journal of Beckington*, p. 65.

‡ Preface to *Commentary on Aggæus* (Parker Soc. ed.)



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again. On his return to England he repaired any sin or irregularity of which he might have been guilty by devotion to his pastoral charge, and by many deeds of generosity. He transferred his see from Thetford to Norwich, and there built a cathedral and monastery besides several other churches. Neville found all this related by William of Malmesbury and other ancient authors, and the following thoughts arose in his mind: "Oh, how wretched was the condition of those times, when ignorance of God covered the whole world with dense darkness! How much happier is our lot, who by the mercy of God have emerged from this pit of superstition to heaven and eternal life! Far different is the beauty and dignity of our Church from that of the Romans, far different the ways of Christians from those of Papists, the splendour of true religion from the darkness of impiety; in a word, the light of the Gospel from that of the lamps with which alone their murky temples are lighted. What stupidity and madness was it that when Herbert in his youth had disgraced himself by such fearful crimes,\* in later life he should have had recourse, not to CHRIST, the only fountain of eternal salvation, but to Rome, to the foul cisterns of the filthy Pope! By this journey not only he did not efface his guilt, but in my opinion he added the crime of perfidy to the infamy of simony. . . . On his return to England he had nothing more at heart than to expend the money which he had heaped together by rapine on the building of churches." Let me interrupt this author's narrative to say that the money expended by Herbert was not accumulated by any fraud or unlawful means, but was merely the revenues of his see, which he spent in good works, living himself with great frugality. Neville then relates the building of the cathedral and of five other monastic churches; and then continues his commentary as follows: "I have related these things, not as approving them, for who would not disdain and hate monastic impiety? But that the men of our time, when they consider the zeal and industry of these men in embellishing their Roman rites and ceremonies, and roused by their example may be inflamed with the love of God and with zeal for true piety. For if the fear of the Divinity impelled these men, bound as they were with a vile superstition and inextinguishable deceits so far that they did not hesitate to spend great sums of money in things perverse and impious, what ought to be our dispositions now that the clouds of error are dispelled, and we gaze on the sun of heavenly discipline? Wherefore as these men spared no expense in building temples, and gathering together assemblies of sacrificing priests, so let us relieve the wants and poverty of the miserable."† What the miserable gained by the destruction of monasteries and such exhortations as the above it is unnecessary to inquire.

A very different order of reflections arises in the mind of a Catholic in considering the ancient churches of England. "The Catholic religion," says Mr Digby, "is essentially a creative power, to edify and not to destroy, because it is under the immediate influence of that HOLY SPIRIT which the Church invokes as the Creative Spirit—*Creator Spiritus*. . . . Alas! with how much nobler an order of monuments than that which the present race of men erects, would England now be adorned, if her rich and powerful nobles and laborious population had continued Catholic! With such means and with the activity inherent in the national character, what might not have been done,

\* His youth had been pure, holy, and studious. No charges but those of simony and adulation have ever been made against him, and even those apparently without clear proof.

† Alex. Nevilli *Norwicus*, 1575, quoted in Latin in Goulburn and Symonds' *Life and Letters of Herbert de Losinga*, vol. 1, p. 392. Both sermons and letters show the author's fervent piety.

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if all had been animated with the generous and self-devoted spirit of the Catholic religion!"\*

I will merely add that when some one shall have patiently gathered together from many quarters all that can throw light on the faith, the love, the zeal for God's glory and for man's salvation, the piety, the energy and the patience which covered our country with innumerable churches, it will be found that a lively faith in the Blessed Sacrament intermingled with all other motives, and was itself the most active and powerful of all. I would at present ask my reader's attention to that which makes especially the sanctity of a Catholic church—its relations to the Mystery of the Word made Flesh, and of the Flesh made Sacrament.

The Council of London, presided over by the Pope's Legate Otho, in 1237, commands that all churches are to be at once consecrated "because in them the heavenly Victim, living and true, namely the only begotten SON of GOD, is offered on the altar for us by the hands of the priest. Wherefore the holy fathers prudently decreed that an action so sublime should not be performed, except in case of necessity, in any places but such as are dedicated to GOD." While making this decree the Council bore witness to the zeal for church erection which then prevailed, by a rule intended to keep it within bounds: "Abbots and rectors must not pull down old churches in order to build better ones without leave of the bishop, who will judge of the necessity or expediency."†

In 1377 Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to the Bishop of St Asaph that it was reported that in his diocese "many of the churches in which GOD Himself is daily immolated and received" were not consecrated, and ordered the rite to be performed immediately.‡

Bishop Lacy of Exeter, in giving orders for the reparation of the church of Glasney, writes that "though the house of GOD in material substance does not differ from the houses of men, yet by its dedication it is made the visible temple of GOD, for the expiation of sin and the imploring of divine mercy, and that in it may be the table on which the living Bread that came down from heaven is eaten for the benefit of the living and the dead."§

The prayers and rites of consecration, and still more the frequent offering of the Holy Mysteries, and their reservation day and night in the Tabernacle, conferred on the building a solemnity of association and a relative sanctity so great that certain profanations had the guilt of sacrilege, and every incongruous act was forbidden as sinful in some degree unless a justifying cause were found in necessity or other circumstances. For the Church has never forgotten that if her Divine Master was consumed with zeal for His FATHER's glory, and scourged away the profaners of the House of Prayer, yet on the other hand the principle which he laid down that the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath has a wide application, and may certainly be applied to the use of consecrated buildings. Thus the holding of fairs and markets even in churchyards was made illegal by a statute of 1285. Yet the same king who had sanctioned this law had no scruple in holding his high court of adjudication and receiving the oaths of the competitors for the crown of Scotland in the church of Norham, since no other public building existed in that neighbourhood.

I make this remark because it has often been said that "ever since the

\* *Mores Catholici*, book III, ch. ii.

† Matthew Paris, *Hist.* p. 449 (ed. Wats).

‡ Wilkins, III, 122.

§ *Monasticon Exoniense*. Oliver, p. 52.



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Reformation Englishmen have treated their churches with infinitely more of reverence (occasionally perhaps mingled with a contemptuous indifference) than was the case with their Catholic forefathers.”\* It is the assertion of one well qualified by his special studies to form a judgement, and whose tone as regards medieval England is in general fair and even sympathetic. The assertion deserves therefore to be fairly met. “The devotion” (says the author of *The Churches of Derbyshire*), “of churches to secular uses in the Middle Ages was not only not regarded as reprehensible, but there is no reasonable doubt that the main object and intention of building the large naves to our churches was for the very purpose of utilizing them as town-halls, courts of assize, market-houses, granaries and storehouses in troublesome times, and even as suitable buildings for the holding of fairs and revels. Spiritual tribunals, justices’ sessions, and manorial courts were all held in the naves of the churches, and the bodies of our majestic cathedrals were used without exception, at certain seasons of the year, for the accommodation of hucksters’ stalls, stages for morris dancers, and the performance of miracle plays, and served as pleasant places for a morning gossip or a midday promenade. There was nothing exceptional about the use to which old St Paul’s was put, and it was not till after the much-abused Reformation that the incongruity of things secular and spiritual under the same roof began to strike men’s minds.”

The best reply to this last assertion will be to quote the language of some pre-Reformation writers. In an old book called *Dives and Pauper*, written by Friar Parker,† occurs the following dialogue:

“*Dives*. What sayest thou of them that hold markets and fairs in holy church and in sanctuary?

“*Pauper*. Both the buyers and the sellers and the men of holy church that maintain them when they might let it, been accursed. They make God’s house a den of thieves, for commonly in such fairs and markets wheresoever it be holden, there be many thieves, mychers and cut-purses.

“*Dives*. And I dread me, that full often by such fairs God’s house is made a tavern of gluttons and a bordel of lychors; for the merchants and chapmen keep their wives and lemans both night and day, and what if the prelates and curates of the place take money of the chapmen for the place that they stand in by covenant?”

At the very time this was being written by a friar, the Lollards were teaching that there was no more reverence due to a consecrated church than to a milk-shed; and it was probably owing not a little to the influence of their principles, which were spreading like a pestilence through the nation long before the Reformation, that so many acts of irreverence are recorded, especially in the fifteenth century. It might surely be unnecessary to prove that the *theory* of a special sanctity in consecrated places, making them unfit not only for the commission of deeds in themselves sinful, but even for the pursuit of ordinary business and amusements, was familiar to Catholics, whatever their practice may have been. If I must quote documents to prove such a truism, let one passage suffice. In a circular to all rectors and vicars Bishop Grosseteste commands by evangelical authority and also by special apostolical (i.e., papal) faculties, that there be no buying and selling in holy places, since the LORD drove such from the temple, lest the house of prayer be made a den of thieves. The churchyards are to be carefully shut and enclosed, the execrable

\* *The Churches of Derbyshire*, by Rev. J. C. Cox, vol. 1, p. 172.

† [The authorship of this interesting treatise is still

unknown. It cannot be Friar Parker’s, but neither can it be assigned to another claimant suggested by Abbot Gasquet. See *The Month*, May, 1897, p. 483.]

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custom observed in some churches of keeping a feast of fools he altogether prohibits by special authority of an apostolic precept.\* In another letter he calls this custom "diabolical."†

The fact is that much of our knowledge of the existence of gross irreverences in the churches in the Middle Ages is simply due to the energetic and unsparing language in which they were condemned by authority or denounced by private zeal. Thus, since Mr Cox alludes to the case of St Paul's, it is from Robert Braybrook, Bishop of London in 1385, that we learn that a part of his cathedral was made into a mere market-place, especially on festivals, and that all kinds of indecencies and enormities were committed in and about it. But, by the same document, we know that he excommunicated all who after admonition should persist in such conduct.‡ I am, then, utterly at a loss to know whence Mr Cox derived his opinion that one of the very purposes for which the large naves of the churches were designed was to serve as halls for profane uses. Certainly it was not from the Pontifical, in which is contained the rite of consecration, every word of which supposes the exact contrary.§ It was not from the canon law, which is quite clear as to what is lawful and what prohibited in churches. It was not from any of our English writers. They all speak to the same intent as John Myrc in his instructions to priests: "Within church and church hay—Do right thus as I thee say—Song and cry and such fare—For to stint thou shalt not spare—Casting of ax-tree and eke of stone—Suffer them there to use none—Ball and bears and such play—Out of churchyard put away—Court holding and such manner chost (i.e., strife)—Out of sanctuary put thou must—For CHRIST Himself teacheth us—That holy church is His house—That is made for nothing else—But to pray in as the Book tells—There the people shall gather within—To pray and weepen for their sin."||

It may be said that the practice was not always in perfect accordance with the theory, but while granting this I think I have sufficiently shown that either they were cases of undoubted abuse or can be explained in a very satisfactory manner when we consider the rudeness of the times; so that the only wonder is that such events were the exception instead of the rule. Fearful sacrileges were perpetrated in the heat of passion and generously atoned for; forgetfulness of God's Presence was common in the church as well as outside it. But of deliberate contempt for the Church's blessings or the presence of the Blessed Sacrament I know of no instance except among the Lollards. I will conclude this chapter with two examples which will illustrate this difference as regards the Real Presence. In a Conquestus made by the monks of Wearmouth against the Baron of Hilton, they mention how his son, having heard some false story, "in his coming to the kirk for to be shriven, thereupon wholly moved, with high and stour countenance entered the choir of the said kirk of Wearmouth, without any prayer or reverence there made or showed to the blessed sacrament."¶ This little circumstance is not the subject of their grievance; they introduce it merely to illustrate the impetuous character of their aggressor; but by noting

\* Bishop Grosseteste's *Letters* (Rolls Series), Ep. 52.

† *Ib.* Ep. 32.

‡ Wilkins, III, 194.

§ I would willingly quote from Bishop Lacy's Pontifical, but must be contented, for brevity's sake, to refer the reader to p. 193 above, where are recorded some of the prayers of Egbert's Pontifical, which were repeated and amplified in later ones.

|| *Instructions for Parish Priests*, l. 330, sq. (E. E. T. Soc.)

¶ *Surtees's History of Durham*, II, 38. The date of this incident is 1430. Lydgate about the same time describes the common practice of the devout: "When thou comest to the holy place—Cast holy water in thy face—Then look to the high altar—And pray to Him that hangeth there." (*Merita Missæ*, l. 37. In *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, p. 148.)



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this exception the framer of the monks' complaints has made known a beautiful and universal practice which has found no direct historian.

An example of a very different kind of irreverence I find in the pages of Foxe, the Protestant martyrologist. The reader will, I trust, pardon the recital of this scoffer's blasphemies, for the sake of the illustration they give of Catholic piety. He relates that when Lady Jane Grey was very young, being at Newhall in Essex, at the Lady Mary's (afterwards queen), "she was walking with Lady Anne Wharton by the chapel, when the latter made her curtsy to the popish sacrament hanging on the altar, which when the Lady Jane saw, she marvelled why she did so, and asked her whether the Lady Mary were there or not. Unto whom the Lady Wharton answered, 'No; but she said that she made her curtsy to Him that made us all.' 'Why,' quoth the Lady Jane, 'how can he be there that made us all, and the baker made him?' This, her answer, coming to the Lady Mary's ears, she did never love her after, as is credibly reported, but esteemed her as the rest of that Christian profession."

My Catholic readers will, I think, share the princess's feeling towards the pert child who thus scoffed at the most loving and adorable of all God's works, unless they will charitably impute the blame to the teachers given her by her parents, men who, to use St Peter's words, "walked after the flesh, despising government, audacious, pleasing themselves, and who feared not to bring in sects blaspheming" (2 Pet. ii, 10). If any Protestant should read this page, I would ask him to make another reflection. It is said that Lady Jane Grey comforted her last moments by reading Plato. Perhaps the most beautiful passage in that sublime pagan's imaginings is one in which, in a certain fashion, he unconsciously and imperfectly foreshadows the mystery of God with men. He has been drawing out in his *Phædo* his belief in a better world than this, a world above this atmosphere of ours. Our air is to the inhabitants of that world what the ocean is to us. "Here on earth we dwell in a sombre and profound abyss, while we fancy we walk on the surface; as if anyone inhabiting some deep hollow at the bottom of the sea were to suppose that he was at the top, and, seeing the sun and stars through the water, were to suppose that the water was the sky, having never risen to the surface; but if he were at last to rise and put out his head above the water, how much fairer would everything seem to him on this beautiful earth, than what he had left below at the bottom. This is what we experience, for, inhabiting an abyss of the world, we think that we are on its surface, and we call the air heaven, from beholding the stars through it, but from our weakness and gravity we are unable to rise to the upper air. If, however, anyone were to escape to the top, or being winged should fly up thither, and, as a fish emerging from the sea, were to behold things there, and if his nature were competent to endure that vision, he would perceive that what is there is the true heaven, and the true light, and the true earth," and that he had been living hitherto as it were at the bottom of the sea. Then Plato goes on to describe that ethereal world. He concludes as follows: "The seasons are of such a nature that there is no disease, and lives are longer than here, and the sight, and hearing, and understanding as much surpass what we possess, as the air is purer than water, and the ether than the air; and moreover, *there are temples and sanctuaries of the gods, in which the gods actually dwell*, and there are responses, and prophesyings and visions of the gods, *and there is a familiar intercourse with them.*" After quoting this passage, Mr Digby remarks: "It was not enough for Plato to deck this sweet world with material beauty, with amaranthine bowers and streams of nectar, with aerie cliffs and glittering sands,

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but his sublime imagination still required him to seek God amidst the pleasant haunts of the garden; for Plato had drunk deeply at the fountain of primitive truth, and had heard of Paradise, and how God had once walked there with man as His friend. Happy indeed the sage, could he have foreseen the restoration of this glorious union in the adorable sacrament of the Christian altar; could he have believed that a period was approaching when men would no longer be left alone in the world, but would possess sanctuaries, where God would be pleased to descend once more amongst them, and to dwell under humble veils, to be ever present with them. Like Stolberg, when first brought to this celestial light, he too would have exclaimed, "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. The sparrow hath found a dwelling and the turtle-dove hath made a nest for her young ones. Thy altars, O God of my strength; Thy altars, O my King and my God, are the place of my peace and my joy, from henceforth and for ever."\*

## CHAPTER VI. RICHES OF CHURCHES

**W**E have already seen how the churches and the veneration paid them was a proof of belief in the Real Presence; in the following chapter we shall be able to gauge and test the sincerity of that belief by seeing what sacrifices men were ready to make of their goods out of devotion to this central mystery of faith.

Walafrid Strabo has given us the following anecdote: "Boniface the martyr and bishop, being asked whether it was lawful to consecrate in wooden vessels, replied: 'Formerly golden priests used wooden chalices; now, on the contrary, wooden priests use golden chalices.'"<sup>†</sup> St Boniface died in 755, and Walafrid was born in 806 and educated at Fulda, where the memory of the doings and sayings of our great English martyr would be best preserved. This anecdote has, therefore, every appearance of being authentic, and has become a popular joke against the clergy. But what the saint said with a sad smile is repeated by sinners with a sarcastic grin or a hoarse burst of laughter. Longfellow was most true to nature when he put the old rhyme into the mouth of a roystering monk:

In the days of gold, the days of old,  
Cross of wood, bishop of gold;  
Now we have changed that rule so good  
To cross of gold and bishop of wood.<sup>‡</sup>

Nor must it be thought that the holy martyr was an enemy to the richness of ceremonial. He merely wished both priests and chalices, if possible, to be golden. It appears from letters written by him from Germany, that he sent to his old friend and patron, Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, some presents, which, though not very precious, were intended to enhance the splendour of worship, viz. "a chasuble, not whole silk, but mixed with goat's wool," and to Pechthelm, Bishop of Withern, "an altarcloth (*corporale pallium*) variegated with white spots."<sup>§</sup> These examples prove that the saint did not think that wooden chalices have any virtue in them to make golden priests, nor golden chalices any secret power to make wooden priests, whatever tendency they

\* Digby's *Broad Stone of Honour*, vol. II (*Orlandus*), p. 154.

<sup>†</sup> Wal. Strabo, *De reb. eccl.* cap. 24; Migne, tom. cxiv, p. 951. The saying of St Boniface was also

embodied in the 18th chapter of the decrees of the Council of Tribur (near Mayence) held in A.D. 895.

<sup>‡</sup> Longfellow's *Golden Legend*.

<sup>§</sup> *Epist.* apud Migne, tom. LXXXIX, pp. 702, 738.



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may possess to make covetous nobles and sacrilegious kings. We may therefore enter upon the study of the riches of the Sanctuary without any fear lest it should prove to be a history of decline and corruption.

At the very time that Walafrid quoted the words of St Boniface, by way of moralizing, he was engaged in defending the increased ceremonial of the holy Sacrifice, and he says that, "as the external glory (*decus*) of the Church had gradually advanced till then, so would it continue to advance to the end" (*usque in finem augeri non desinet*). Unhappily in our own country we have not much opportunity of judging with our eyes what was the wealth of medieval churches. Though the skeletons of cathedrals and parish churches survive to tell us, by the splendour of their architecture, what must have been the far greater splendour of the altars for which they were designed, yet it requires a well-instructed imagination to recall even faintly, in the present dreary wastes of York or Lincoln, Gloucester or Westminster, what they were when filled with altars, glowing with colour and gleaming with gold and silver.

A recent writer, who has made a long and special study of old English plate, says: "It is difficult to realize the splendour of the display that would have met the eye of him who entered one of our great cathedrals or wealthy parish churches on very high festival days, in the three or four centuries that preceded the Reformation. The Church was the nursing mother of the arts, which lent themselves in their turn to the adornment of her services. The monks were the goldsmiths of the Middle Ages. St Dunstan himself was the patron of their craft in England; what wonder then that the wealth of gold and silver in its shrines and treasures was immense, so immense as to be almost incredible!"\*

That there is no exaggeration in this will be evident to anyone who reads the old inventories, many of which are given in Dugdale, or in the publications of antiquarian societies; and especially the records of the plunder gathered into the jewel-house of Henry VIII. To take but one or two specimens out of multitudes: "The total weight of the plate seized by Henry at Fountains Abbey was 2,840 ounces of silver; and in addition to this was a cross of solid gold, and a table or frontal for the high altar, with three images of silver gilt, with beading and plate of silver gilt and some part gold and set with stones."† At Byland he got 516 ounces; at Rievaulx, 522; at Kirkham, 442; at Bolton, 329; at Newborough, 698. Dugdale gives many columns of the riches seized at Glastonbury. Amongst other things were four solid gold chalices and patens weighing together 106 ounces.‡ The same author, in his *History of St Paul's*, gives an inventory of the treasury, made in A.D. 1295.

\* *Old English Plate*, by W.J. Cripps, p. 173 (Murray, 1878). Yet after an extensive inquiry Mr Cripps could not find more than half a dozen specimens of English medieval chalices now in existence. (*Ib.*, p. 184.) [It seems worth while to allow this note to stand as originally written, since it affords an interesting illustration of the want of finality which often attends such researches as those of Mr Cripps even when carried on for many years. In the ninth edition of the same work Mr Cripps, who had meanwhile had the advantage of using the articles of Messrs St John Hope and Fallow (see *The Archaeological Journal*, vol. XLIII), enumerates thirty-seven English pre-Reformation chalices which still survive, without counting the coffin chalices. The pre-Reformation English patens are still more numerous. More than ninety are known to exist, though most of these

belong to the early years of the sixteenth century. It is interesting to note that two or three of the pre-Reformation English chalices remain in Catholic hands and are still used for the Holy Sacrifice; for example those at Claughton and Hornby in Lancashire. A pre-Reformation Irish chalice is in use at Fernyhalgh, also in Lancashire. One of the most noteworthy is an early chalice belonging to the Westminster Cathedral bearing English hall marks for the year 1529. Round the bowl in Tudor lettering is the blundered legend, VERE PERCEPTIO CORPORIS ET SANGUINIS DNE IESU XPE; and round the base CRUX XPI SALVA NOS CRUX XPI PROTIGE NOS. Cripps, *Old English Plate*, ninth edition, 1906. Pref., p. vii and pp. 218-238.]

† *Memorials of Fountains*, p. 294 (Surtees Society).

‡ *Monasticon*, vol. I, p. 63 (ed. 1846).

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Among twenty-eight morsers three are of pure gold; there are five gold chalices, and twenty-seven silver ones, splendid cups for the Blessed Sacrament, crosses, shrines, silver images of our Lady and other things of exquisite workmanship and immense value.\* This treasure must have enormously increased in the 240 years before it was all seized by Henry.

In the sacristy of Winchester, when Henry sent his commissioners, were five crosses of gold adorned with jewels, candlesticks, pax, sacring-bell, pectoral cross, rings, reliquaries, all of gold; the nether frontal of the high altar of plate of gold garnished with stones; images of silver gilt, the silver shrine of St Swithin, with other ornaments almost numberless.†

Scotland was far poorer than England, yet what we know of its churches shows that Scottish generosity vied with English in decorating the sanctuary.

In 1559, on July 7, in fear of the church plundering to which Knox was inciting the nobles and the mobs, the Bishop of Aberdeen distributed the gold and silver plate of his cathedral into the hands of his canons and others for safe custody. A record was made at the time. There was a silver statue of our Lady weighing 114 ozs; also a chalice of pure gold with diamonds and rubies in its foot, and its gold paten, the gift of Bishop Dunbar, which weighed 52 ozs; a great silver "Eucharist" or monstrance, double-gilt and artificially wrought; two silver candlesticks, weighing 6 lb 14 ozs; the "bishop's great mitre all overset with orient pearl and stones, weighing 5 lb 15 ozs; and about 1,000 ozs of other silver plate. Bishop Gavin Dunbar alone had given to his cathedral 900 ozs of silver."‡

These examples have been taken at random as the first coming to hand, merely to illustrate what Walafrid Strabo meant when he said that the external lustre of the Church would go on increasing to the world's end, in which prophecy he was partly right and partly wrong. He was right in believing that while faith and devotion remain in the world they will prompt men to offer their best to God. But he was wrong in forgetting how the cupidity of powerful men, who always make the riches of the house of God their first resource, would effectually prevent any perpetual or even very lengthy accumulation. Saxons plundered the churches of the British Christians, while the heathen Danes were tempted in their turn by the rich offerings of the converted Saxons. Even the Christian Normans were not guiltless of the plunder of many a rich shrine, to be melted down for the necessities of a conquering army, or to be transferred to continental churches,§ while the plunder of churches and of church lands was in England as elsewhere the prevailing cause of the apostasy of the sixteenth century.

A more clear-seeing prophet than Walafrid was Erasmus, and since he wrote of the wonderful wealth he had seen in England his words may be appropriately quoted.

In a Colloquy written about 1524, one of the speakers objects to the magnificence of churches, and the money spent on vestments, statues and organs,

\* *History of St Paul's*, pp. 310-339. [One medieval gold chalice of English workmanship still survives, that made for Bishop Fox in 1507 and presented by him in 1516, with a gold paten, to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on its foundation. There the chalice and paten are still honourably preserved.]

† *Monasticon*, i, 202-204.

‡ These details are taken from the *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, vol. i, p. 86 (Spalding Club). See also Hay's *Scotia Sacra*, vol. i.

§ Thomas of Ely tells how the monks sought to

recover the grace of William the Conqueror, after the resistance to him in the Isle of Ely, by a present of a thousand marks, to raise which they had to melt down crosses, altars, shrines, book-covers, chalices, patens, etc., and a splendid image of our Lady and the Divine Child made of gold and silver. (*Anglia Sacra*, i, 610.) Ingulf says that to pay the *Danegelt* King Ethelred despoiled the churches: "Direptis thesauris ac monasteriorum tam sacris calicibus quam aliis jocalibus, etiam sanctorum scrinia jubentur ab exactoribus spoliari."

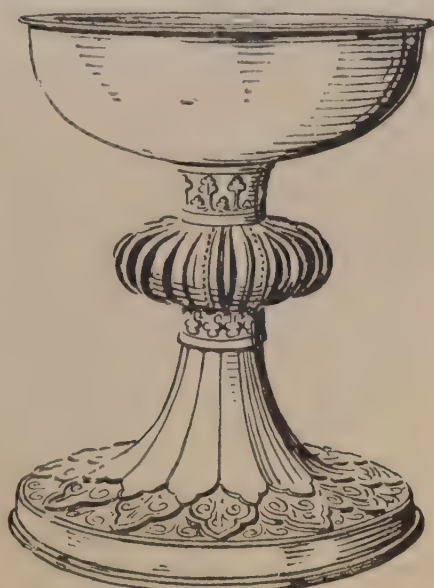


# RICHES OF CHURCHES

“whilst at the same time our brethren and sisters, the living temples of CHRIST, perish with thirst and hunger.” To this the other speaker replies: “In these matters, indeed, no pious and wise man would not prefer moderation. But, since this fault arises from a species of extravagant piety, it claims indulgence, especially when we recollect the various disorders of those who despoil churches of their wealth. It is generally given away by princes and monarchs and destined to perish more lamentably in gaming or in war. And if you alienate anything from this source, at first it is regarded as sacrilege; next, those who have been accustomed to give withdraw their hands; finally they are even led on to rapine. Therefore the ecclesiastics are more the guardians than the masters of these things.”\*

In the instructions given by Henry VIII, about twelve years after this was written, to the commissioners whom he sent to seize the riches of Walsingham, there are clear proofs that he had read this Colloquy of Erasmus, and it is curious that he fulfilled its foreboding to the letter.

The last observation of Erasmus that ecclesiastics were merely the guardians and not the owners of the riches offered to the churches is of great importance, though often forgotten. Revenues and Church lands indeed, though they may be used well, are yet capable of being made to serve luxury and corruption. But the same thing cannot be said of shrines erected to the saints, golden altar frontals, jewelled chalices, and cloth-of-gold vestments. A priest becomes no richer because his church is filled with these. He is often rather impoverished by the expense attendant on their care and reparation. The riches we are now discussing were in no sense the property of the individual priest who served the churches. They had been given to God; and in a very true sense they were the property of the people. I do not mean that the people had any right to take back what had been given irrevocably to God and His Saints, but that such things were given to God for the sake of His worshippers and contributed to the people's devotion.† The cathedrals and parish churches throughout England in the Middle Ages were the homes and palaces of the poor as much as of the rich. They were museums and galleries of art, as well as temples of divine worship. Each town was proud of its own church and of its art treasures; and when the men of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire rose in arms against Henry VIII, one of the reasons they assigned was that they feared (and their fears were but too well founded) that their parish churches would soon share the fate of the great monasteries. It is not perhaps the highest view of this subject, yet it should not be forgotten, that while for the last three hundred years, until within a very recent period, all works of art and all wealth have been the exclusive property of the rich, and it is only now that at last free art museums are being opened in some of



CHALICE FOUND AT DOLGELLY

(Date c. 1230)

\* Nicholl's translation in his *Pilgrimage to Walsingham*, p. 53.

† Bracton, an English jurist of the thirteenth century, calls them “*res nullius*,” when, by the appoint-

ment of men and solemn consecration, they have been made the peculiar property of God. (*De legibus Angliæ*, lib. i, cap. 12, n. 8, 10, p. 58, Rolls ed.)

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our larger cities, for eight hundred years previously art and splendour were distributed throughout the whole country. The peasantry in the remotest hamlets, while cherishing their own parish church and proud of its silver cross for Good Friday and its banners for procession-days, the gifts of their own humble forefathers, could, without travelling beyond their native country, visit the great abbey or cathedral on a festival day and gaze freely upon inestimable riches, which bishops, nobles and monarchs had presented during the course of centuries. Of all these things the bishops or the abbots were but the guardians, just as the parish priest and the churchwardens were the guardians of the sacristy of the parish church. The poor bondsmen possessed them as much as the clergy or the nobles. It has been well said, that throughout the Middle Ages works of art were to the people "free as the light of heaven and the loveliness of nature, to declare like them the glory of God, and excite the piety of His people."\*

But we must not consider the riches that adorned our altars merely as a means of exciting or nourishing devotion. They were in general monuments which testified to its previous existence. There is often some beautiful history connected with the building of a church, the erecting or beautifying of an altar, the presenting of a chalice or a vestment. Volumes would not contain all that might be gathered on this subject from the biographies of kings or queens, the acts of the saints, the chronicles of monasteries, parochial records and registries of wills. And it may be safely affirmed that the most generous contributors to churches and altars have been uniformly the most intellectual and morally noble, just as their plunderers have been the vilest and most impure.

Thus we are in no way surprised when we read that Henry VIII at one cast of the dice lost to Sir Miles Partridge four great bells, called JESUS bells, and the image of St Paul, from the top of the spire of that saint's cathedral in London.†

It mattered little to the king that these things did not belong to him and were the gift of others. It was amusing to stake them in a game of chance. So also we are not surprised that a certain Dr John Smith gratifies Anne Boleyn with "a precious little cross with a crucifix all of pure gold, with a rich ruby in the side, and garnished with four great diamonds, four great emeralds, and four large ballases and twelve great orient pearls," etc.: with the humble petition that the queen will do him some little service relating to the deanery in return.‡ It is quite what we expect, that schismatical ecclesiastics should pilfer from the altar, and that heretical queens should accept their gifts. But, on the other hand, we are not surprised, though we are edified, to read of the gifts of Catholic kings and queens, nobles and ecclesiastics.

Thus Canute, at the time he was earning for himself the fame of a just and intelligent ruler, was also a generous benefactor of churches, and his pious visits to Croyland, Ely and Glastonbury are on record. He was seconded, or perhaps instigated, by Queen Emma. When they went together to Croyland, besides more valuable presents they bestowed "twelve beautiful white bears' skins for the altars on festival days," and a vestment of silk embroidered with eagles of gold. At Ely, Emma made an offering which her own hands had worked. This was "an altar cloth of a green colour and beautiful with plates of gold, that appeared raised. If viewed lengthways along the altar it seemed of a

\* Digby, *Orlandus*, p. 440.

† Dugdale's *St Paul's*, p. 87.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 403.



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blood-red colour, and it was finished at the corners with rich gold ornaments, which reached to the ground." At Glastonbury they present a pall "of various colours woven with the figures of peacocks," and another, "embroidered with apples of gold and pearls": while at Winchester their gifts in gold and silver are said by the chronicler to surpass description.\*

A curious story is related as to one of these gifts by Richard of Ely. According to him, the riches of the church sometimes tempted not only thieves and kings but even bishops. Nigellus, a Norman, made Bishop of Ely in the evil days of King Stephen, besides other unjustifiable acts of plunder, seized on the magnificent palla which Queen Emma had given to veil the tomb of St Etheldreda, and sold it to the Bishop of Lincoln without the consent of the monks. The Bishop of Lincoln took it to Rome to offer to Pope Eugenius to gain his favour. But when the Pope saw it he was so struck by its beauty that he inquired into its history, and when he heard it he bound the bishop to restore it to Ely under pain of excommunication. It is fair, however, to say that Bishop Nigellus at a later period of his life was most devout, and that, dying in 1169, he left many precious vestments to his church: "an alb embroidered in gold with marvellous beasts and birds, and the collar adorned with precious stones—a black chasuble bound with gold, and a yellow one with red birds, and a cope that was called 'The glory of the world.'"†

The munificence which we have seen in Canute and Emma had been a characteristic of the better class of English kings and princesses from the beginning. Thus Venerable Bede relates "there is a noble monastery in the province of Lindsey called Beardeneu (Bardney), which Queen Ostrida and her husband Ethelred much loved, and conferred upon it many honours and ornaments." It was there that the queen built and decorated at her own cost the tomb of her uncle St Oswald, hanging over it his banner of gold and purple.

Not only in Saxon times, but until the Reformation, one of the principal occupations of ladies was to work exquisite vestments for churches, so that the old poet thus addresses them:

And ye, lovely ladies, with your longe fynGRES,  
That ye han silk and sendal to sowe, when tyme is,  
Chesibles for chapelynes, churches to honoure.‡

But on this subject we ought to hear a lady discourse. "During the seventh century," says Mrs Hall, "much talent was exhibited by our Anglo-Saxon countrywomen in the art of embroidery: women of the highest rank excelled in the accomplishment, and the example was followed by others. The products of this feminine industry and skill were usually devoted to the church and its ministers, and were esteemed so valuable as to become heirlooms, bequeathed by their owners to those most dear to them. The needles of illustrious women were busy, from the fair Ostrida, who wrought the tragedy of a murdered uncle, to the Norman Matilda, who depicted upon canvas the heroic actions of a warlike husband. The Anglo-Saxon ladies excelled in needlework and gold embroidery, and also were acquainted with the arts of dyeing and weaving. The last is alluded to by St Aldhelm in these words:

\* See Mrs Hall's *Queens before the Conquest*, II, 294-296.

† *Anglia Sacra*, I, 627-630.

‡ *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, B Text Passus VI, vv. 10-12. [It would be easy to quote many other pas-

sages in illustration, e.g., the *Ancren Riwele*, p. 421,

"Make no purses to gain friends therewith, nor blodbendes of silk, but shape and sew, and mend church vestments and poor people's clothes."]

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‘The shuttles, not filled with purple only, but with various colours, are moved here and there among the thick spreading of the threads, and by the embroidering art they adorn all the woven work with various groups of images.’ Spinning was, indeed, so common an employment of the female sex, even among women of royal blood, that the will of King Alfred terms the members of his family who were of the female sex ‘the spinning side;’ so that the modern term of ‘spinster’ has descended to us in allusion to those unmarried, and able to devote themselves to feminine accomplishments more exclusively.”\*

The author of the *Historia Eliensis* relates how, in the days of Canute, a young and noble lady named Ældeswida, without becoming a nun, gave herself and her property to the service of the church of Ely, and, living in a house not far removed, there shut herself up with her maidens, spending the time not required by her devotions, in the working of orphreys and similar textures.† Theodoric, the confessor of St Margaret of Scotland, says that “her chamber was like a workshop of a heavenly manufacture. There the copes of singers, chasubles, stoles, altar cloths, and other priestly vestments and church ornaments were always to be seen, either already made with admirable beauty or in course of preparation.”‡

One more example of noble ladies must suffice. It is that of the wronged and insulted queen of Henry VIII. Miss Strickland has taken her narrative from the contemporary manuscript of Nicholas Harpsfield.

“At Bugden, Queen Katharine spent her solitary life in much prayer, great alms, and abstinence, and when she was not this way occupied, then was she and her gentlewomen working, with their own hands, something wrought in needlework, costly and artifiically, which she intended to the honour of God to bestow on some of the churches. There was in the said house of Bugden a chamber with a window that had a prospect into the chapel out of the which she might hear divine service. In this chamber she enclosed herself, sequestred from all other company, a great part of the night and day, and upon her knees used to pray at the same window, leaning upon the stone of the same. There was some of her gentlewomen, which curiously marked all her doings, who reported that oftentimes they found the said stones, where her head had reclined, wet as though a shower had rained upon them. It was credibly thought that in the time of her prayer she removed the cushions that ordinarily lay in the same window, and that the same stones were embued with the tears of her devout eyes, when she prayed for strength to subdue the agonies of wronged affections.”§

Having dwelt so long on the piety of kings, queens and ladies, I must be content with selecting, as specimens of their respective classes, one nobleman and one great ecclesiastic, in order to show how the highest manly virtue and enlightened piety were united with zeal for the glory of God’s house.

Robert Melhent or Fitzroy, sometimes called Robert Rufus, natural son

\* *Queens before the Conquest*, vol. II, pp. 4-6.

† *Historia Eliensis*, lib. II, cap. 30, apud Gale (*Scriptores*, xv). The *aurifrisium*, or more properly *aurifrigium*, was Phrygian work in embroidery in solid gold wire or gold thread. For this English ladies were famous, and it was called *Opus Anglicum*. (See Rock’s Introduction to *Catalogue of Textile Fabrics* of South Kensington Museum, and *Church of Our Fathers*, vol. II, p. 276, and Farcy, *La Broderie*). [The two most

famous specimens of the *Opus Anglicum* are the thirteenth century Syon Cope at South Kensington and the Ascoli Cope. On these Mr Eric Maclagan’s little Guide to the English Vestments in the South Kensington Museum may also be consulted with advantage.]

‡ Vita S. Margaritæ, cap. I, *Acta SS.* tom. XXII.

§ Miss Strickland’s *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. IV, p. 141.



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of Henry I and first Earl of Gloucester after the Conquest, is thus eulogized by Lord Lyttelton: "He was unquestionably the wisest man of those times, and his virtue was such that even those times could not corrupt it. If, when the nation was grown equally tired of Matilda and of Stephen, he had aspired to obtain the crown for himself, he might very possibly have gained it from both. But he thought it less glorious to be a king than to preserve his fidelity and honour inviolate. He seems to have acted only from the purest and noblest principles of justice and duty, without pride, without passion, without any private views or selfish ambition."\*

Of this great and worthy man it is related that he had the abbot and twelve monks of Tewkesbury to dine with him frequently on Sundays. He built the castles of Bristol and Cardiff; and that he might sanctify this work, undertaken for the protection of the country, not for its oppression, he gave every tenth stone that he had brought over from Caen in Normandy, towards erecting a chapel of our Lady in Bristol. This chapel formed part of St James's Priory there, which he had founded on his own demesne lands and endowed.† He was also founder of Margan Abbey and endowed that of Neath. The history of our churches reveals many a pious nobleman like Robert Fitzroy as founder or benefactor, and many a brutal plunderer, noble only in name.

From laymen let us turn to ecclesiastics; and passing over such well-known names as William of Wykeham, William Wainflete of Winchester, Grandison of Exeter and Hugh of Lincoln, let me take one from the north of Scotland, less familiar to Englishmen. William Elphinstone was Bishop of Aberdeen at the opening of the sixteenth century. The learned editor of the Episcopal Registers of that city writes of Elphinstone in the following language:‡ "We know him in the history of the time as the zealous churchman, the learned lawyer, the wise statesman; one who never sacrificed his diocesan duties to mere secular cares, but knew how to make his political eminence serve the interests of his Church; who, with manners and temperance in his own person befitting the primitive ages of Christianity, threw around his cathedral and palace the taste and splendour that may adorn religion; who found time, amid the cares of state and the pressure of daily duties, to preserve the Christian antiquities of his diocese, and collect the memories of those old servants of the truth who had run a course similar to his own; to renovate his cathedral service, and to support and foster all good letters; while his economy of a slender revenue rendered it sufficient for the erection and support of sumptuous buildings and the endowment of a famous university."§

The present students of the University of Aberdeen would be surprised and perplexed to learn that their founder, who has just been described by a Protestant writer in terms such as the above, ordered that a large silver image of our Blessed Lady should be carried on certain days in procession round the interior of his cathedral. But it will not surprise Catholics that a man eminent in learning and virtue should be zealous for every detail which could contribute to the splendour of God's worship and the honour of His saints. John of Salisbury, the friend of St Thomas of Canterbury, thus wrote to a bishop: "Be solicitous that in all your churches, according to their means, not only silver chalices be renewed, but the vestments and all that is used in the sacred minis-

\* *Life of Henry II*, p. 344.

† *Rudder's History of Gloucester*, pp. 51-53.

‡ *Registers*, edited for Spalding Club, p. xliii.

§ See *Register*, vol. III, p. 170.

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try be so repaired that they can be fitly employed in the service of God. And in this, spare neither monks nor canons, nor any dignitary, obliging them to give to God what is best and most honourable. For in proportion as a man loves God and his own soul, so does he honour the church committed to his care.”\* This last warning about putting pressure on careless or avaricious ecclesiastics brings us back to the point from which we started. For it shows that wooden priests would be satisfied with ragged vestments and pewter chalices; whereas golden chalices, though they do not necessarily sanctify those that use them, are generally the gift to God of saintly men and women.

Let anyone study the history of our cathedrals or the chronicles of our great abbeys; he will find a long succession of bishops and abbots, and other ecclesiastics, devoting their revenues to the building and adorning of their churches, and the greater magnificence of the altars and ceremonial. But these things are so notorious that they are acknowledged even by the bitterest enemies of the Church, who, as they can neither deny these acts of generosity and piety nor imitate them, are generally contented with imputing them to unworthy motives, and either calling them superstition or sacrifices worthy of a better cause.

Perhaps the most frequent complaint is that of Judas, that it was waste, and that the money thus spent would have been better given to the poor. This objection has been already to some extent met, since it has been shown that in reality the money was spent upon the poor, not indeed directly in feeding or clothing their bodies, but on their souls in stirring up their feelings of devotion, and in lightening by the splendour and beauty of God’s house and worship the monotony and sadness of a life of toil and poverty.

But the question of the poor shall be considered more attentively. And first, who are those who constitute themselves the advocates of the poor and critics of the Church? The case of Judas, says the Protestant Bishop Andrews, “is like when they that have wasted many pounds complain of that penny waste which is done on CHRIST’s body the Church. Or, when they that in all their whole dealings, all the world sees, are unreformed, seriously consult how to reform the Church. When they that do no good with their own, devise what good may be done with Mary Magdalene’s; when they that have spent, and sold, and consumed themselves, and never in their whole lives showed any regard for the poor, talk of charitable uses. God help us, when Judas must reform Mary Magdalene!

“But our SAVIOUR CHRIST overruled the case,” continues Andrews, “and stayed the sale of Mary Magdalene’s ointment; and in staying it said enough to stop their mouths for ever that make like motions. But this ‘Do but let her alone’; if you will not further, yet hinder her not, trouble her not. That which she hath spent, of her ability she hath done it; she hath not had of you one penny toward her three hundred, nor she asketh you none. Seeing you are at no cost, why should it grieve you? If you like not to follow her, yet let her alone.”†

These words of Andrews are severe, and are answer sufficient to most adversaries. Yet the principles of the Catholic Church on this subject deserve some explanation for their own sake, and independently of objectors.

It is certain then, that, though under ordinary circumstances, or even to meet ordinary distress, the riches of the altar should not be alienated, yet under the pressure of urgent need and in extreme want, it has been ever looked upon

\* *Bib. Max. Lugd.* tom. xxiii, p. 430.      † *Sermons*, vol. II, serm. 3



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as an act of piety to sell what was given to our LORD, for the relief of His suffering members.\* That this should not be done without very grave reason is clear, since it would defeat its own object. Charity to the poor has ever been nourished by devotion, and devotion has been stimulated by the beauty and magnificence of God's worship. The same people who are generous to the church are generally the most charitable to the poor, and it is not unfrequently on days of festival, when the heart has been warmed and melted by the beautiful celebrations of our REDEEMER'S mysteries, that the noblest projects for the relief of human misery are entertained or matured. No more short-sighted policy could be conceived than to strip the church of its beauty or diminish the splendour of its rites to meet the ordinary claims of poverty. In general and urgent cases of distress it is otherwise. Such a case was the ransom of King Richard I in 1193. When the Emperor Henry VI exacted an enormous sum for the release of his royal prisoner, "besides what was given by laymen," say the *Margan Annals*, "the revenues of all the churches were tithed, gold and silver and precious stones of abbeys and other churches were taken, crosses and feretories were stripped, and even the sacred vessels of the altar spoiled. They could indeed be redeemed for money at a value a little above their weight, and Richard, after his release, made some efforts to restore them."†

It is related of St Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester in the time of King Edgar, that during a great famine he sold all the plate of his church to purchase food for the poor, saying that if the church be reduced to poverty it can be again replenished, but that if the poor are starved it is not in the power of man to recall them to life.‡

Yet this same saint is renowned for his zeal for the splendour of the sanctuary. When a monk at Abingdon, with his own hands he made a wonderful candelabrum called the Golden Wheel. It was covered with forty pounds' weight of gold and silver, and had twelve lamps and innumerable bells hung round it. He also made a table or reredos in which the Blessed Virgin and twelve apostles were sculptured, of gold and silver of immense value.§

Another munificent churchman was Abbot Ingulf of Abingdon. He had bestowed gold and silver ornaments on his church; yet in a season of distress he melted down a splendid reliquary for the relief of the poor, and that, too, by the advice of his monks. He died in 1158.||

The chronicler who relates these things severely blames another abbot, named Alfred, for hoarding up when the poor were starving.¶

In beautiful contrast and yet in harmony with acts of generosity to the poor, I may relate two examples of disregard of self. St Elphege had been the immediate successor of St Ethelwold in the see of Winchester, and had thence been transferred to Canterbury. When the Danes took his archiepiscopal city, the life of the archbishop was spared by their avarice; and the

\* Bracton says: "Sacred things are those which have been solemnly consecrated to God by the bishops, as sacred and religious buildings, and gifts which have been solemnly set apart to the service of God, as chalices, crosses, censers, which it is forbidden to alienate, *except for the purpose of redeeming captives.*" —*De legibus Angliæ*, l. 1, cap. 12, n. 9, p. 60 (Rolls ed.)

† *Annales Monastici*, 1, 22 (Rolls ed.)

‡ St Rembert, Archbishop of Hamburg (A.D. 865–888), when reproached by some for selling consecrated chalices for the redemption of captives, replied:

"Cum nullum aliud habeo consilium, non impie ago, si Christianum, qui filius Dei est, cum thesauris Ecclesiæ redimo, cum et semper invenire possimus quod ad usum sacri sufficiat ministerii, irrecuperabile autem sit, si Christianus in captivitatis afflictione deficiat." (In *Vita ejus*, cap. 18, apud Langebek, *Rerum Danicarum Scriptores*, tom. 11, p. 140). Also *Acta SS.* tom. 14, Feb. 4. Something very similar is related in the life of St Cæsarius of Arles.

§ *Historia de Abingdon*, 11, 278 (Rolls ed.)

|| *Ib.* 11, 214, 291.

¶ *Ib.* 11, 293.

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price of his ransom was fixed at three thousand pounds of silver. "Had he called," writes Dr Lingard, "upon the neighbouring clergy to give up their sacred ornaments, the sum might probably have been raised; but to the urgent requisitions of the barbarians he answered that the life of a decrepit old man was of little value, and the obstinacy of his refusal increased the severity of his treatment."\*

Another Bishop of Winchester was Waldekin, who died in 1098. The Winchester Annals say: "King Rufus sent word to him on Christmas Day, after he had begun Mass, that he must send him without delay two hundred pounds. As he knew that without robbing the poor and despoiling the church he could not do this at once, this and similar troubles made him so sad that he was weary of life, and he prayed that God would take him from its sorrows. And this happened ten days later. He was a man of perfect piety and sanctity, and of great abstinence."†

I have spoken of the riches of the churches as given by the wealthy to aid the devotion of the poor, and as being sometimes sold by their guardians for the relief of the poor; but it should not be forgotten how large a proportion of these riches were the gift of the poor themselves. Though a poor man could not give a gold chalice, yet he gave what he could afford. And the widows' mites, besides being each of them intrinsically as great, and perhaps greater before God, than many a pompous offering, were so numerous as, when added together, to make no inconsiderable sum even in the eyes of men.

Bradshaw, in describing the shrine of St Werbergh at Chester, among the donors does not forget the poor. "Some gave a cope, and some a vestment, some other a chalice, and some a corporaxe, many albs and other clothes offered there was, some crosses of gold, some books, some bells; the poor folk gave serges,‡ torches and towels."

Of course the evidence of such small gifts can hardly be given here. The diligence of county historians and historians of particular churches has indeed often gathered from old papers, such as churchwardens' accounts, many interesting records even of very humble gifts. But one or two specimens are all that I can give. Mr North in his chronicle of the Church of St Martin, Leicester, tells us that the brethren of the Guild of the Assumption in All Saints agreed, by a subscription of a penny each every Sunday, to raise a fund to purchase one vestment, one chalice, one missal, and other ornaments.§ And as each one of the ten thousand guilds throughout the country had its own chalice and vestments, the money must have been raised in a similar way.

Jeffrey Pincknay, a poor weaver of Richmond in Yorkshire, makes his will in 1546,|| and after leaving 5s. for a trental of masses for his soul and all Christian souls, bequeaths to the church-work 8d., and wills that Thomas Amgill (perhaps his son-in-law and heir to his cottage) shall give 4d. yearly "to the light belonging to our occupation before the Sacrament." By which little item we see that the guild of weavers kept a light constantly burning in honour of our LORD's Presence.

Not many wills of serving-men have been printed. Here is one. "The second day of May, 1559, I, Robert Carlill of the parish of Wyclyf, in the County

\* *A. S. History*, II, 295.

† *Annales Monastici*, II, 39 (Rolls ed.)

‡ Tapers, from French *cierges*.

§ North's *Chronicle*, etc., p. 62.

|| *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Richmond* (Surtees Society, vol. xxvi).



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of York, serving-man to Mr William Wycliffe, of Wyclyf, Esq., whole of mind, of good memory, and crazed in body, I thank my LORD and GOD, do make my last will. . . . I give to the high altar, in the worship of the Holy Sacrament, 3s. 4d. Item, I will that there be given among my household fellows to pray for my soul 10s.”\* Poor Robert’s little bequest came too late. Elizabeth was already five months on the throne, and in a few weeks after the date of this will the Blessed Sacrament was removed from the high altars of all parish churches. But Robert, we hope, had his reward.

I will now conclude this chapter with some words of Fisher, which will bring the tradition of St Boniface down to the eve of the Reformation, and it will be interesting to find the proverb used by our great martyr, St Boniface, repeated by the lips of another martyr.

Fisher published in 1509 some sermons on the penitential psalms, which he had preached by the desire of the Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII, and in her presence. In one of these he says: “The glory and worship of the Church standeth not in silk copes of divers colours craftily embroidered, neither in plate of gold or silver, nor in any other work or ornament, be it never so richly garnished with precious stones. These rich jewels in the old temple were necessary to be had and used for the apparel of the bishop and other priests ministering the old law. But sith it is so all their doing was but only a shadow and figure of things to come, therefore now we may not seek the outward glory and worship of the body, but only the inward honour and profit of the soul. As St Paul witnesseth saying, ‘Gloria nostra hæc est, testimonium conscientiæ nostræ.’ Our joy is the testimony of a clean conscience. Which joy without fail shone more bright in the poor Apostles than doth now our clothes of silk and golden cups. Truly it was a more glorious sight to see St Paul, which got his living by his own great labour, in hunger, thirst watching, and in cold, going woolward† and bearing about the gospel and law of CHRIST both upon the sea and on the land, than to behold now the archbishops and bishops in their apparel, be it never so rich. In that time were no chalices of gold, but there were many golden priests. Now, be many chalices of gold and almost no golden priests.

“Truly neither gold, precious stones, nor glorious bodily garments be not the cause wherefore kings and princes of the world should dread God and His Church, for doubtless they have far more worldly riches than we have. But holy doctrine, good life, and example of honest conversation be the occasions whereby good and holy men, also wicked and cruel people, are moved to love and fear Almighty God. . . .

“O Blessed LORD, how glorious and beautiful should Thy Church be, if it were garnished and made fair with such virtuous creatures; for then should all people fear Thy holy name, and all kings and princes should dread Thy excellent glory, if Thou wouldst edify and ornate Thy Church on this manner. Then shall it be seen in a shining garment of divine grace, gilt with the golden wisdom of Holy Scripture, and garnished round about with all manner of precious stones for the diversity of virtues. Which glory shall blind the worldly sight of kings, it shall turn the heart of princes from voluptuous delectations, and pierce through into the minds of all people much more than all the riches of this world.”‡

\* *Ibid*, p. 130.

† [To “go woolward,” i.e. to wear rough woollen garments next the skin, was a form of mortification,

the equivalent of a milder kind of hairshirt. Shakespeare writes in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, v, 2: “I have no shirt, I go woolward for penance.”]

‡ In *Ps.* cxii (E. E. Text Society’s ed., p. 180).

## THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT

Were the above words of Fisher read alone and without knowledge of the circumstances of his life, it might be supposed that he was an enemy of ritual splendour. This was not the case. His generous gifts of plate and vestments to the College of St John in Cambridge tell a different tale. He was most certainly an enemy to pomp and luxury in ecclesiastical life, to that secular pomp which was the bane of his age, and against which his own life was a glorious protest. He did not grudge the Church her golden chalices; but he sighed and wept, and scourged himself to blood, when he thought: "Now be many chalices of gold, and almost no golden priests." But while we gladly listen to admonitions from golden bishops like Boniface and Fisher, we grow angry at the lecturing of priests of base alloy like Erasmus, or the men of clay and iron who spoiled our Churches under pretence of spiritual worship.



# PART THE FOURTH

## THE EUCHARIST IN POPULAR LIFE

### CHAPTER I. THE HOLY EUCHARIST AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

IT is a disadvantage intrinsic to the subject of this work that, having to pass in review various classes of men and women, I can treat of one side only of their life, an important and noble phase indeed, yet not that which was most characteristic. In many respects it would be incongruous to group together canons, monks and nuns, yet it is not so in their relations to the Holy Eucharist. If a cathedral chapter has not much in common with a convent of nuns, the monks will supply a connecting link, sharing with the former in the solemnity of worship, and with the latter in the discipline of the religious life. In the churches of all, though psalmody or the divine office occupied daily a longer time than was devoted to the Eucharistic Rites, yet these held a higher place, whether looked upon as spiritual exercises or as acts of homage paid to God. To all, the chapter or conventual Mass was the principal act of each day.

It is uncertain whether the Holy Sacrifice was daily offered in the Columban monasteries of Scotland in the early ages; but there is no doubt that its omission for even a day in later times was regarded in every part of Great Britain as a neglect of rule. Reform always began at this point, as we have seen in the case of the Culdees of Scotland and of the secular canons of Winchester. When in the thirteenth century Archbishop Peckham visited the Welsh dioceses, he found, owing principally to the long wars with England, that ecclesiastical discipline had fallen into decay. In the various measures taken for its re-establishment the restoration of the day and night office and of the daily Mass held a first place.\* I have now to speak of the public worship of cathedral, collegiate, and monastic churches, as well as of the private Masses of canons and monks. Then, after treating of the communions of the lay brethren and of nuns, I shall pass to the devotion to our LORD's abiding Presence, which was common to them all.

The order of the day was not precisely the same in all well-regulated cathedrals; yet as the main features were alike, one or two examples will be sufficient to give a general view of the worship offered to God in the mother churches of every diocese of Great Britain, from Christ Church, Canterbury, to St Magnus in the Orkneys.

The statutes of the cathedral church of Aberdeen were drawn up in 1256 by Bishop Peter de Ramsay, with the approbation of Pope Innocent IV. This bishop appointed thirteen prebendaries; and in addition to these, thirteen vicars, of whom seven were priests, three deacons, and three sub-deacons. There were daily two regularly fixed Masses, one of our Lady at an early hour, and the High Mass at nine o'clock, and two of the vicars were appointed by turns to celebrate them for a week. Both these Masses were sung, the first by the celebrant and choir, the second with the assistance of deacon and sub-deacon. All the other priests, unless prevented by reasonable cause, had to say Mass daily for the dead.

\* Injunctions for the diocese of St Asaph, A.D. 1284, Haddan & Stubbs, I, 565; for the diocese of St David, *ib.* 571-3

# THE EUCHARIST IN POPULAR LIFE

By degrees the number of prebendaries was increased to twenty-nine, and that of perpetual vicars to twenty, besides two deacons and two sub-deacons. And before the Reformation no less than sixty-eight anniversaries, most of them being foundations made by the clergy themselves, were celebrated in this cathedral.

In 1506 Bishop William Elphinstone, the illustrious founder of the University of Aberdeen, reformed his cathedral services and added to their solemnity. The Mass of the Blessed Virgin was sung daily at six, the principal Mass at ten, and the Vespers at four, p.m. This order continued until Calvinism substituted popular hymn-singing and the soliloquies of the minister for the adorable sacrifice and the perpetual commemoration of CHRIST's Death.\*

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the constitutions of Lichfield provided that the Mass of the Blessed Virgin be sung every day before Prime, and after the Chapter, Mass for the dead, but without deacon or sub-deacon. About noon the High Mass was celebrated with deacon and sub-deacon, and on double feasts, with two deacons and two sub-deacons.† In 1428 Bishop William Heyworth remodelled the constitutions of this cathedral. Mass was to be celebrated at five, six, and every subsequent hour till ten. At ten the High Mass began; and a low Mass for wayfarers was to begin immediately after the consecration in the High Mass.‡

Besides the cathedral church of each diocese, the piety and generosity of bishops, nobles, and citizens had erected and endowed many collegiate churches, where the cathedral model of worship was closely followed by a body of priests called Fellows or Secular Canons, living together in community. A certain number of them usually had the care of the parish in which the church was situated.

The statutes of Ottery St Mary's, drawn up by John Grandison, bishop of Exeter (1327-69), require that on every day of the year, except Good Friday and Holy Saturday, a solemn Mass of the Blessed Virgin be sung in her chapel before Prime. At this Mass two Vicars were to be present *ex officio*. This, however, did not satisfy the zeal of the pious bishop. He writes as follows: "Let one canon at least, who desires to have the blessing of our Lady, be present at her Mass, to see that all is done properly and devoutly. Likewise the other canons and vicars, who are not then reasonably occupied or saying their private Masses, should go to the Mass of the Blessed Virgin—if they love her better than their own vanities—that they may obtain the blessing of the mother of CHRIST and the grace of her Son more abundantly in their necessities." He granted an indulgence of twenty days each time they assisted at this Mass. All the priests, whether canons or vicars, were to celebrate at least twice a week. The High Mass was sung at a later hour.§

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III, founded in 1478 a college at Middleham, and he himself drew up the statutes. Matins began at 6 a.m. from the Annunciation to Michaelmas, and at 7 a.m. during the rest of the year. They were sung by the dean, the six priests and the clerks;

\* *Registr. Aberdeen*, II, 47, 102 (Spalding Club). Besides the clergy there were six choristers. These were tonsured like religious, and wore a blue cassock with surplice; and before the matins of the day they had to recite in a low but audible voice the matins of our Lady in front of her altar. (*Ib.* pp. 114, 115.)

† Wilkins, I, 496. [Since Father Bridgett wrote, a good deal has been done towards the publishing of cathedral constitutions and customaries. Mr Walter

Frere's *Use of Sarum*, Henry Bradshaw and Christopher Wordsworth's *Lincoln Cathedral Statutes*, W. Sparrow Simpson's various contributions to the *History of St Paul's* and Reynolds's *Wells Cathedral* deserve to be specially mentioned. But it would be impossible to take account of all in detail. They only add wider illustrations of the class of facts here noticed by Fr Bridgett.]

‡ Wilkins, III, 504.

§ Oliver, *Monasticon Exoniense*, p. 269.



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but Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None by only two priests and the clerks. These Hours were followed by our Lady's Mass daily, except on Friday, when the Mass of the name of Jesus was sung. On the feasts of the Blessed Virgin the High Mass was sung in her honour, and that of the Holy Name was used to take the place of the early Lady Mass. Every day the High Mass was celebrated with the presence of the whole college and choir. On Wednesday a Requiem Mass followed the Mass of our Lady. The Vespers commenced at 4 p.m. from the Annunciation to Michaelmas, and at an earlier hour in winter. At the end of vespers a solemn anthem of the Blessed Virgin was sung at the lectern in the midst of the choir; and every Friday between five and six was sung the anthem of Jesus, followed by the *Stella Cæli*.\*

Many of the English cathedrals were served by monks, and the services of the greater monastic churches in general character resembled those of cathedrals. It would require a special treatise to show fully and in detail the variations in worship and ritual of the different religious orders, and the modification that took place in each succeeding century. But it will suffice for our present inquiry if, in addition to what is incidentally said elsewhere in this work on the religious life, I here give a few regulations regarding the private Masses of the priest-monks and the communions of the lay brethren.

By the constitutions of the papal legate Othobonus, in 1268, the superiors of religious were instructed to watch over the frequent confessions of all their subjects, and to take cognisance of such priests as frequently omitted to celebrate Mass.† In the visitation held by Archbishop Winchelsey of his own church of Canterbury in 1298, it was decreed that no priest should abstain from Mass for eight days without giving the reason to the prior or his substitute. If he neglected to do this, he could not return to the altar to celebrate again at his own discretion.‡

By the constitutions of Benedict XII, for the Benedictines or Black Monks, which were published by the abbots of St Mary's, York, and St Albans, in 1337, it was decreed that all priests residing in the abbey must celebrate at least two or three times a week, and those in the universities at least once a week.|| A similar constitution was made by the same pope for the canons regular of St Augustine.§ A hundred years before, the monks of St Albans had of their own accord legislated as follows: "Since the monasteries are maintained by the alms and gifts of benefactors now dead, that their souls be not neglected and deprived of the Masses due to them, it is decreed that whoever shall refrain from celebrating for four days must be secretly admonished by the abbot or prior, and if he do not amend and show reasonable cause for his omission, on the following day he shall be publicly accused in the Chapter."¶

The care of the monks for benefactors and for the dead is very conspicuous throughout their annals. Thus we read in 1350, in the Annals of Evesham, that it was the ancient and laudable custom in that convent to serve out for the soul of every monk, for a whole year after his decease, his stated allowance in the refectory, in the same manner as when he was alive, and afterwards to distribute it to the poor. "But," to quote the words of the Abbot William, "since so many have perished (by the pestilence) this is now very burdensome. However, that the souls may not suffer, and that the burden may be relieved, William de Stone, who is affiliated to this house, has granted

\* *Archæol. Journal*, xiv, pp. 160-170.

† Wilkins, II, 18. In the 53rd chapter of the Constitutions.

‡ *Ib.* II, 245. || *Ib.* II, 610. § *Ib.* II, 648.

¶ Statutes of 1249, in Matthew Paris (ed. Wats.), Addit. p. 171.

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lands from which money is assigned to the keeper of the Blessed Virgin's altar in the crypt, who is to provide a chaplain to celebrate Mass for those who have perished in the pestilence, every day immediately after the conventual Mass at the altar of St Stephen."\*

This document refers to the dreadful pestilence in 1350, and leads me to a reflection on that and similar calamities. The decay in religious houses was in great measure owing to the "black death" and subsequent plagues in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The few surviving inmates could not keep the rule, and to supply vacancies new members were admitted with less discretion than before. Dr Oliver has gathered from the episcopal registers of Exeter some startling details of the plague of 1349 and following years. "Not a single inmate of Sandown Hospital escaped death, and two abbesses, eleven priors, and very many canons fell victims in 1349. When in 1361 the plague broke out again, it carried off two abbesses at Wherewell, two abbesses at St Mary's, Winchester, the Abbot of Chertsey, and eight or nine priors of various houses." The havoc in the northern dioceses was no less terrible than in the south. Canon Raine, in his "Introduction to the Northern Registers," writes of the year 1349: "There were not priests enough within the province (of York) to administer the sacraments of the Church. The numerous vacancies recorded in the livings during the year show that the Yorkshire priests had fallen like leaves before the gale. They at least did not shrink from the performance of their duty. The strongest evidence of the awfulness of the mortality is to be found in the licence which was granted by Pope Clement VI to Archbishop Zouche, enabling him to hold supplementary ordinations, to supply the ravages which the plague made among the ranks of the clergy."†

On October 24, 1348, at the news of the approach of the pestilence, William Edyndon, bishop of Winchester, ordered the seven penitential and fifteen gradual psalms to be recited in his cathedral on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and on the latter day also the Litany of the Saints. The people were earnestly invited to penance and confession. A procession was made through the city, in which the people joined, walking barefoot, fasting, and reciting the "Our Father," and "Hail Mary." The procession was followed by Mass in the cathedral.‡ The sovereign Pontiff granted a plenary indulgence during the pestilence, on condition of receiving the sacraments.§

The plagues of the fourteenth century tempt me to relate another history. Ralph Haget, abbot of Fountains, of a noble family, had followed the profession of arms till the age of thirty. The old writer of his life tells us of the marvellous sweetness he experienced even as a novice when receiving holy communion; but still more edifying is the account of his eagerness to impart some of that sweetness to console the last moments of the poor. "Incessant rain had produced a grievous famine among the common people in 1194, which brought in its train an acute fever, so contagious and fatal that there were scarcely any found to nurse the sick or to bury the dead. The ordinary preparations for funerals were dispensed with, and unless a person was of consequence or wealth, he was committed to the earth within the hour in which he died. In many places even separate graves could not be made, and the dead were deposited together in pits dug for the purpose. The houseless poor congregated at the gate of Fountains in so great a multitude that shelter could

\*Tindall's *Evesham*, p. 192.

†*Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Registers*, p. 31. (Rolls Series), 1873. [The subject has been more fully dealt with in Abbot Gasquet's

work *The Great Pestilence*, Lond. 1893, which has lately been reprinted.]

‡*Edyndon Register*, MS. tom. II, fol. 17.

§*Ib.* fol. 19-21.



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not immediately be provided for them all. The abbot, therefore, ordered huts—like shepherds' huts—to be made with branches of trees cut from the adjacent wood, in which the famished people were entertained. He procured diligent persons who ministered to their necessities, and he appointed priests who daily visited the sick and the dying, received their confessions, administered the viaticum, and entombed the dead with Christian rites.”\*

From this digression I proceed to the communion of monks who were not priests, and of nuns.

The Constitution of Benedict XII for the Benedictines in 1337, prescribed weekly confession and at least monthly communion to the monks who were not priests.†

The rule of St Gilbert of Sempringham, the only rule of purely English origin, prescribes that the canons, when raised to the priesthood, are to celebrate at the will of their priors. The canons who are not priests must communicate every Sunday, or some other day in the week, and whenever they minister at the altar in vestments on double or principal feasts, but not at Masses of the dead. The lay brothers and choir novices as well as the sisters—for St Gilbert founded a double order—are to receive communion only eight times in the year, unless by the judgement of their superior for some good cause they receive oftener or not so often. The eight communion days were, Christmas Day, the Purification, Assumption, and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, Thursday in Holy Week, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, and All Saints. The lay novices, both male and female, were to receive only thrice in the year, at Christmas, Sheer Thursday (*dies absolutionis*), and Easter. If any were prevented by occupations or obedience (i.e., absence from the monastery) from communicating on the appointed day, they were to supply on the first convenient opportunity. If anyone neglected communion on the day fixed and for a week afterwards, he was to receive three disciplines in the Chapter, unless illness or some good reason had excused him.‡

An old English Franciscan Manual, quoted by Mr Brewer,§ states that the statutes made in the General Chapter called Bercynonde ordain that “Every brother shalle have a confessor assigned hym by the wardene, to the whiche he shallbe at the lest in the weke be shrivyn ii tymes, and ons in fourtynghete too be howselyd in the high Mas, but yf he be dispensid withalle of the presedent.”

Weekly communion for those dangerously sick appears to have been the general rule in the various orders.

As to the mode of communion; among the Gilbertines, the choir brethren, or canons who were not priests, served the Masses of their brethren and communicated at various altars. The lay brethren were to receive at the early Mass, and, if prevented, at the High Mass.¶

The rule of St Bridget of Sweden for her nuns was that they should be bound to confess at least three times a year, but were at liberty to confess on any day. Communion was to be received on Easter Day, Ascension, Pentecost, and Christmas Day, but those whom God had inspired with greater devotion might,

\* *Memorials of Fountains*, pp. 123 and LXI, (Surtees Society, 1863).

† Wilkins, II, 610. [This section of Fr Bridgett's work might now be considerably enlarged. Apart from unpublished materials, a very large number of monastic customaries, rules, etc., have been printed of recent years. Sir E. M. Thompson's edition of the *Customary of St Augustine's, Canterbury, and St Peter's, Westminster*, Mr J. Willis Clark's *Observances of the*

*Augustinian Priory of Barnwell*, W. de Gray Birch's *Ordinale Conventus Vallis Caulium*, etc., are only specimens of a great deal of other useful work of this kind that has recently been done.]

‡ Dugdale, *Monast. Angl.* vol. vi., part II, pp. 44-62.

§ *Monumenta Franciscana*, p. 576 (Rolls Series, 1858).

¶ Dugdale, *ubi supra*, p. 62.

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with the advice of the confessor, communicate every Saturday. In the additional rules made for the English foundation of Sion in the fifteenth century, it was prescribed that the bishop at his visitation should inquire, "If any go unconfessed seven days together without a reasonable impediment known and allowed by her ghostly father;" "If any go unconfessed fourteen days through her own default;" "If any sister on the days of precept of the rule withdraw herself from communion without license or forbidding of her confessor;" and also "If any sister be 'comened' any other day than the days of precept or Saturdays, without license of the confessor."\*

This rule enters into details, by which we find the communion could sometimes be given after Mass, as well as during Mass; that the *Confiteor* was said aloud by the communicants, and that a communion cloth or towel† was held in their hands, or else spread before them by the assistant acolytes.‡ The lay-brothers either communicated at the Mass they served, or all together at the conventual Mass.

It is probable that communions in religious houses were much more frequent than the mere precept of the various rules might suggest.§ Yet it is certain that they were rare compared with those of the present day. That the nuns were taught to supply by spiritual communion is evident from the following exhortation:

"Forasmuch as they that are present and hear Mass may receive our LORD spiritually at every Mass, like as the priest receiveth him in the sacrament, therefore, in time of *Agnus Dei*, and while the priest useth,|| you ought to dispose you full diligently and devoutly, and with great fervour and ghostly desire, to stretch out your love and devotion reverently to our LORD, that ye lose not so great a ghostly fruit, and be not prived of the sweetness of that heavenly feast, with which ye may be fed at each Mass that ye hear, if ye will desirously set your heart thereto."¶

I now come to another and an important aspect of the monastic life; I refer to the silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and to the prayers poured out before the altar.

Robert Grosseteste, the learned and pious Bishop of Lincoln (1235-1253), thus writes to the monks of Peterborough: "In your monastery continually dwells the King of Heaven, not only by His Divinity, but in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, by the true substance of the Flesh, which He took from the Virgin Mary"; the bishop then goes on to exhort the religious to think often of this Presence and to honour It by the sanctity of their lives.\*\* These three lines, like a vivid flash of lightning, reveal the existence of a whole region of devotion, but like the lightning they give only a momentary glimpse and all is dark again. Vainly we strive to penetrate that darkness, for it has pleased GOD that the record of the prayers and tears, the acts of love and gratitude and adoration, that for centuries were offered before countless altars in England, should be reserved for eternity. Men who read hastily or unsympathetically the

\* Aungier, *History of Sion*, pp. 253, 277.

† In an inventory of St Andrew's, Bridport, 29 Henry VI, is the following entry: "A longe towelle, ywroughte to howselle pepylle, of v yerdys longe." *Sixth Report of Historical MSS. Com.*, part 1. p. 477.

‡ *History of Sion*, pp. 308, 328.

§ [It is certainly noteworthy that according to the customary of St Augustine's, Canterbury, an important and influential religious centre, the monks not yet ordained but in minor orders, were required to receive holy communion once a week. If they neg-

lected to do so they were to be put on lenten diet until the rule was complied with. See Sir E. M. Thompson's Edition, 1, p. 152. This represents the usage of about 1340].

|| *To use* was a common expression for to communicate. A rubrick of the Hereford Missal has "usque ad usum," and "antequam utatur." (See *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, pp. 381-2).

¶ *Mirror of our Lady*, written circ. 1430 (E. E. T. Society's ed. p. 331).

\*\* Grosseteste's Letters, Ep. 57 (Rolls Series).



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monastic chronicles that have been preserved complain that the monks seem to have been occupied in nothing but in increasing their possessions, or in quarrelling about their rights. It would be as reasonable to expect that a man's correspondence with his lawyer and steward should reveal his literary occupations or his domestic virtues, as that the chronicles of a monastery should make known the daily life and devotion of its inmates. They are little more than historical treatises on the origin of the title-deeds and charters in the muniment room. That there was a very different aspect of the religious life besides that of acquisition and of strife will be admitted by all who have any familiarity with the subject; nevertheless, not even those who have spent a lifetime among medieval documents can recall the life of prayer and contemplation before the altar, except by means of analogy with what may be seen to-day in every convent chapel or monastic church. Judged by that analogy, what holy, what lovely pictures does medieval England bring to the imagination!

Milton had nothing but hatred for the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist, yet he had caught a glimpse of its effects in his travels, the memory of which inspired the line,

Pensive nun, devout and pure;

and Wordsworth almost touched the mystery of the Real Presence when he wrote:

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;  
The holy time is quiet as a nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity.

Surely this beautiful image drawn from what Wordsworth had seen, a nun before the tabernacle, ought to have arrested his pen when, in obedience to Protestant tradition, he wrote his sonnet on Transubstantiation, and spoke of "rites that trample upon soul and sense."

The same poet has borne noble testimony "to saintly Fisher and unbending More." Though neither of these was a monk, yet both were the willing associates of the holiest monks of the day, and both strengthened a holy life and prepared for a holy death by fervent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. With their testimony, then, I can appropriately conclude this chapter.

A prayer of Sir Thomas More has fortunately been preserved, in which occur the following words:\*

"O sweet SAVIOUR CHRIST, by the divers torments of Thy most bitter Passion take from me, good LORD, this luke-warm fashion, or rather key-cold manner of meditation, and this dullness in praying to Thee. And give me Thy grace to long for Thy Holy Sacraments, and specially to rejoice in the Presence of Thy Blessed Body, sweet SAVIOUR CHRIST, in the holy Sacrament of the Altar, and duly to thank Thee for Thy gracious visitation therewith, and at that high Memorial with tender compassion to remember and consider Thy most bitter Passion. Make us, good LORD, participant of that holy Sacrament this day, and every day make us all lively members, sweet SAVIOUR CHRIST, of Thine holy mystical body Thy Catholic Church."

Such was the faith and devotion of Sir Thomas More, if not learnt, yet fostered by his sojourn among the Carthusians. A passage from the controversial writings of his holy friend and fellow-martyr, Bishop Fisher, will bring us more directly to the monastic life. It occurs in his book written in answer to *Æcolampadius*.

\* This is printed in the Appendix to Knight's *Life of Erasmus*.

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Æcolampadius had been a monk in the order of St Bridget. When he had fallen away from the Catholic faith, under the influence of Zwingli, he wrote a treatise against the Real Presence with such a show of piety and reason that he almost won over Erasmus to Protestantism. Its effect was very different on Fisher, who had not only learning to refute its historical fallacies, but that deep sanctity which detected and shrank with horror from its false unction and very real impiety. Amongst other arguments Æcolampadius made use of a grotesque kind of appeal to conscience for sincerity and earnestness. Fisher quotes from him the following words: "If we really with the whole heart believed that CHRIST was present in the Eucharist, it would be a wonder if we could be drawn away from adoring Him, and not lie prostrate before that bread day and night, and yet we only do so morning and evening, though indeed the superstition of some monasteries has almost gone as far as this." His meaning appears to be: "Be honest and look into your hearts and lives, and you will find that you do not believe this doctrine of the Real Presence at all. You have been only forcing yourselves and making pretence of believing it. Have then the courage to cast it off, and worship GOD in sincerity and freedom of soul."

Fisher answers this appeal by showing that it is founded on exaggeration, as well as sophistical in its deductions, and that such a mode of argument might be equally well directed against belief in the Blessed TRINITY or the existence of GOD. "Tell me, Æcolampadius," he says, "do you really believe with all your heart that the Blessed TRINITY is everywhere present? If so, how is it that you suffer yourself to be drawn from adoration? Why are you not day and night on your knees, and not only morning and evening, since the Blessed TRINITY seeks to be adored in spirit and in truth in every place? You will find that the Blessed TRINITY is invisible. True, yet He is present, as every faithful man believes. Still no one is found who remains prostrate before Him always, day and night. Why then do you find it strange that we suffer ourselves to be withdrawn from the adoration of CHRIST in His Sacrament, since He is neither better nor more bountiful, nor more powerful, nor indeed, as regards His sacramental presence, more visible to the eyes than the Blessed TRINITY?"

"As to what you say to monasteries, who is there to be free from your cavils? First, you chide Catholics in general, as if they did not believe in the Eucharist, because they are not prostrate day and night before It; and then again, when you find that some strive to do this, you chide them too and call them superstitious. Had you but tasted one drop of the sweetness which inebriates the souls of those religious from their worship of this Sacrament, you would never have written as you have, nor have apostatized from the religion that you formerly professed."\*

In these last words Fisher gives a key which unlocks much that is mysterious in the great defection that was already begun on the Continent, and was about to begin in England. It is a fearful thing to contemplate the number of priests who floated up and down on the currents of religious change, intent only on retaining their benefices, and the facility with which throughout England so many of the monks, at the bidding of Henry, repudiated the Sovereign Pontiff in the most outrageous terms, and afterwards denounced the religious life of which they had made profession. *They had not tasted that the Lord is sweet, or they never would have thus apostatized.* It is true that this apostasy did not during the reign of Henry touch directly on the Holy Eucharist, yet *devotion* to the Holy Eucharist would have preserved them—as it did preserve many

\* Fisher, *De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis*, 1, cap. 21.



## THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

—from schism even at the cost of life. That Fisher himself owed his glorious death to his tender love for JESUS CHRIST in the mystery of His love will not be doubted by those who will ponder the following account given of him by Hall. What this author states he had himself gathered from the lips of eye-witnesses.

“He never omitted so much as one collect of his daily service, and that he used to say commonly to himself aloud without the help of any chaplain, not in such speed or hasty manner to be at an end as many will do, but in most reverend and devout manner so distinctly and treatably pronouncing every word, that he seemed a very devourer of heavenly food, never satiate nor filled therewith. In so much as, talking on a time with a Carthusian monk who much commended his zeal and diligent pains in compiling his book against Luther, he answered again, saying that he wished that time of writing had been spent in prayer, thinking that prayer would have done more good and was of more merit.

“And to help his devotion he caused a great hole to be digged through the wall of his church at Rochester, whereby he might the more commodiously have prospect into the church at Mass and Evensong times. When he himself should say Mass, as many times he used to do, if he were not letted by some urgent and great cause, ye might then perceive in him such earnest devotion, that many times the tears would fall from his cheeks.

“And lest that the memory of death might hap to slip from his mind, he always accustomed to set upon one end of the altar a dead man’s skull, which was also set before him at his table as he dined or supped. And in all his prayers and talk he used continually a special reverence and devotion to the name of JESUS. . . . When night was come, which commonly brings rest to all creatures, then would he many times dispatch away his servants and fall to his prayers a long space. And after he had ended the same, he laid him down upon a poor hard couch of straw and mats (for other bed he used none) provided at Rochester in his closet near the cathedral church where he might look into the choir and hear divine service. And being laid he never rested above four hours at a time, but straightway rose and ended the rest of his devout prayers.”\*

Bishop Fisher was deprived of the power of offering the Holy Sacrifice during his long imprisonment, but not of the memory of its sweetness or the influence of its grace. He went like Elias in the strength of that food to the Mount of GOD. When the last hour came, as he left his prison for the scaffold, he opened his New Testament to find some word of consolation. “This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true GOD and JESUS CHRIST whom Thou hast sent.”† Such were the words on which his eyes fell. He closed the book, saying: “Here is even learning enough for me to my life’s end.” As he mounted the scaffold, the south-east sun shone very brightly in his face, whereupon he exclaimed, lifting up his hands: “Draw near to Him and be enlightened, and your countenances shall not be put to shame.”‡ Thus did he who had ever sought the face of GOD in His hidden mystery pass into the Beatific Vision.

\* Hall’s MS. *Life of Fisher*.

† John xvii, 3.

‡ Ps. xxxiii, 6.

# THE EUCHARIST IN POPULAR LIFE

## CHAPTER II. THE HOLY EUCHARIST AND THE SOLITARY LIFE

THE subject of the present chapter, The Solitary Life, may seem at first sight to be misplaced in a history of Holy Communion. Yet in reality there is not only no contradiction but a very close analogy between the Christian hermit and that mystery of condescension and persevering love which has caused our LORD to be called by some the Hermit of our tabernacles. Multitudes of men and women have, with the full sanction of the Church, withdrawn themselves from their fellow-creatures to live solitary by themselves; and their seclusion has had for one of its motives, and certainly for its sustaining force, a closer intercourse with JESUS CHRIST in the Holy Eucharist. After a slight sketch of the nature and history of the solitary life I will trace its connexion with the Blessed Sacrament in the history of this land.

A life of voluntary religious seclusion has had followers in Britain since the introduction of Christianity. We are told that Britons were among the crowds who surrounded the column of St Simeon Stylites, whose fame in the fifth century spread throughout the whole Christian world; \* and if they did not imitate precisely the form of his extraordinary penance, it is very probable that the hermits of the British fens in winter equalled in austerity the Eastern solitaries who endured the blaze of the summer sun. The bleak, storm-swept coasts of Cornwall, especially in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, were likewise the abode of many holy hermits, whose names are still preserved by the churches and villages that sprang from their oratories and cells. And the solitary life at no time lost its charm for the Welsh. Hermits are mentioned in the laws of Howell the Good in the tenth century.† In the twelfth, Giraldus, who was ever more prone to blame than to praise, declared emphatically that “Nowhere will you be able to find hermits and anchorets of greater austerity or more truly spiritual than in Wales.” ‡ History bears the same testimony to the Picts and Scots. The solitary life came into honour with the immediate disciples of St Columba, and did not decline in the dark days of heathen desolation or civil strife. For those causes that work the ruin of a life of community and of organized rule have the contrary effect on the eremitical life. Hardship and persecution keep away from the unhonoured cells all pretenders and half-hearted aspirants, and fill them with the heroic men who retire from a world they cannot otherwise aid, to weep before God over its woes and to make reparation for its crimes. Although seclusion and continual prayer day and night have been practised by Christians in all ages since the commencement of the Church, yet the eremitical life has taken an external form principally by means of persecutions. As in the days of which the Apostle speaks to the Hebrews, “they wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins, being in want, distressed, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy; wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.” Many who thus began this life under compulsion, found so great a sweetness in the uninterrupted intercourse with God, and in the perfect subjection of the body to the soul, that they clung to it when they might have returned to an easier mode of life.

\* From the West there came many as Britons, *Life of St Simeon*, Bollandist *AA.SS.* 1, 277. Simeon Spaniards, Gauls, and from all intervening countries. died in 459.

† Haddan and Stubbs, 1, 265.

‡ *Ib.* 662.



## THE SOLITARY LIFE

And their words and example provoked others to emulation. Hence, when St Margaret went to Scotland, while she found society rude and vicious, and ecclesiastical discipline in decay, the country abounded with holy solitaries. Some of them were her own Saxon countrymen driven by the Norman conqueror into exile. "There were very many," says her confessor and biographer, "dwelling in cells in different parts of the Scotch kingdom, and by their great austerity living rather the lives of angels than of men. The queen was wont to venerate and to show her love to CHRIST in these His servants, and would frequently visit and converse with them and commend herself to their prayers. And when she could not induce them to receive from her hands any earthly gift, she earnestly begged them to impose on her by precept some alms or work of mercy; and she immediately and devoutly fulfilled whatever they suggested, whether it was succouring the poor and needy, procuring the liberty of captives, or assisting those who were in misery and oppression."\* Similar impulses drove both Saxons and Normans to emulate the solitary life of the Celtic hermits.

The solitary life was practised both by men and women; among the former some were priests, and some were monks, who, after spending a considerable time under monastic discipline, received the permission of their abbots to pursue a more austere life in solitude, whilst they still remained under their former religious obedience. Sometimes also the lay hermits, without making profession of a monastic rule, placed themselves under the care of a neighbouring community.

The word Hermit or Eremite (from *eremus*, the desert) is properly applied to those solitaries who dwelt in fens, islands, woods and mountains, who were not *strictly* enclosed and lived by the produce of a field or garden. The Incline or Recluse, on the contrary, was confined within fixed and narrow limits, and being thus shut up and unable to procure means of sustenance, except by the assistance of others, lived in the neighbourhood of men. The cell of a recluse was usually built on a bridge, or over a city gate, or against a church, within or in close proximity to a city or town, yet entirely cut off from the citizens and townspeople.

In ecclesiastical Latin the former was called *Eremita*, the latter *Anachorita*, *Reclusus*, *Inclusus*, or *Retrusus*. The English word in common use was applied to both modes of life. This was *ancra*, *ancar* or *anchor*, for men; *ancres*, *ancresse*, for women who led the life of solitaries.

In process of time it became necessary for the Church to make practical regulations for modes of piety and seclusion that are in their own nature extraordinary and demand extraordinary grace, and might degenerate either into fanaticism or become a cloak for hypocrisy. Hence in later times the bishop's permission was needed by those who undertook this life, and that for several reasons—to prevent imposture and scandals; to give an ecclesiastical *status*; and because the eremitical life often required the erection of a chapel and the celebration of Holy Mass. In 1240, the Bishop of Exeter made a foundation for the maintenance of a recluse near the chapel of St Lawrence in Crediton; in 1383, the bishop of the same diocese granted a license to David Bukketore, a poor hermit of the chapel of St John Baptist, near Tavistock, to have the Holy Sacrifice offered in his chapel.† Entries like these are common in episcopal registers.

Both the hermit and recluse entered on the solitary life by taking a special

\* *Vita S. Margaritæ*, cap. 3, n. 19; *AA.SS.*, June 10.

† Oliver, *Monasticon Exoniense*, pp. 88, 93.

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habit and making a solemn profession. The lay hermit did this in the following terms: "I, N. not wedded, promise and avow to GOD, and to our Lady Saint Mary, and to all the saints of heaven, in the presence of you, Reverend Father in GOD, N., Bishop of N., to live in perpetual chastity, after the rule of St Paul, the first hermit, in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen."\* The bishop then prayed as follows: "O GOD, who didst feed the Israelites in the desert with manna for forty years, and who didst show Thy delight in the eremitical life both by Thy Son spending forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, and by Thy prophets and saints, grant, we beseech Thee, that this Thy servant, who chooses as far as in him lies a similar life, may by the eremitical discipline so change, order, and regulate his life, that by persevering progress he may attain to its perfection and at length reach the joys of the perfect. Through our LORD," etc. When the bishop gave him the habit, he admonished him to live chastely, soberly, and holily in vigils, fasts, labour, prayers, and works of mercy.† That these works of mercy were sometimes of a very humble though useful nature is seen from an entry in Bishop Waynflete's Register, where it is recorded that this bishop grants an indulgence to all who shall assist a hermit who is giving his labour to mend roads and bridges at Farnham.‡

The ceremonial for walling up a recluse was much more solemn. It was required that his vocation should be very rigorously tested, and the candidate was warned not to think much of himself because he was thus about to be secluded from the company of men, but rather to consider that it was done by GOD's Providence for his salvation, lest he should sin more grievously if exposed to temptation, or should contaminate others by his bad example. He was to look on himself as one condemned to prison for his crimes, and unworthy of the society of men. He prepared for his seclusion by a general confession and a rigid fast on bread and water, and spent the preceding night in vigils. On the morning the bishop, or priest appointed by him to perform the ceremony, stood at the altar with the clergy, and the candidate, if a cleric, lay prostrate, barefoot, in the middle of the choir; if a layman, outside the entrance of the choir; if a woman, in the west side of the church, which was set apart for women,§ while several psalms were sung, together with the litanies and appropriate prayers. At the end of the prayers the candidate received two lighted tapers from the bishop, lessons were read from the Old and New Testaments, and then the solemn profession was made by the anchorite, and the tapers were placed on the altar. The clothing followed, and a sermon was preached to the people. If the anchorite was a priest, he then said the Mass of the HOLY GHOST; if a layman or a woman, during the Mass said by the bishop or his delegate, the newly professed received Communion. A procession was then formed and the anchorite was led to the cell, which was blessed by the bishop. After the blessing of the cell—in the case of a priest, of the oratory and the altar—the bishop coming forth proclaimed: "If he wish to enter, let him enter"; and while the anchorite entered to take possession of his future home, the choir sang the antiphon, *In Paradisum deducant te angeli* with the psalm, *In exitu Israel*. Once more the enclosure was sprinkled and incensed; and the office of extreme unction (the sacramental forms and anointings being of course omitted) was recited,

\* Bishop Lacy's *Register* III, fol. 352.

† Bishop Lacy's *Pontifical*, p. 129. The profession was sometimes called *ordinatio*.

‡ A.D. 1472. *Reg.* fol. 157, b.

§ It is thus stated in Bishop Lacy's *Pontifical*.

We have seen (vol. II, p. 192) that in earlier days the north aisle was reserved for women. Perhaps the practice was not uniform, though the sexes seem always to have prayed apart in public worship.



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likewise the Commendation of the Soul and the first part of the Burial Service. A grave inside the cell was opened, and the anchorite laid himself in it, intoning the words: "This is my rest for ever and ever. Here will I dwell, for I have chosen it." The bishop cast earth on the body, then raising the anchorite from the grave, he gave him a last word of advice and left the cell. The door was immediately walled up and sealed.\*

It has been said that "nothing short of the insane obstinacy of fanaticism could have supported human nature under the self-privations practised by the hermits";† and Tennyson has been thought to have painted to the life in his soliloquy of St Simeon Stylites this form of madness in which an unreal and exaggerated sense of guilt struggles in vain with a more powerful consciousness of extraordinary sanctity. History, however, tells us that the bishops who deliberated on the novel mode of penance practised by St Simeon took an effectual means to try his spirit, and make sure whether he was a saint or a fanatic. They ordered him at once to leave his column, and, as he obeyed without a moment's hesitation, they recognized that he was not guided by "insane obstinacy," but by humility, and he was allowed to remain. Had he refused obedience, neither his penances nor his miracles would have won for him the slightest consideration. It is principally by this test of humility and obedience that the Church in every age distinguishes between extraordinary vocations that come from God, and extraordinary delusions. Without this test we might easily confound St Francis of Assisi with George Foxe, the founder of the Quakers, or St John Colombini with the unauthorized laymen who preach in Methodist revivals.

It would be useless to try to convince those who take a fundamentally different view of life from that of the Catholic Church, that men who immured themselves as did recluses were not fanatics. Yet every man who wishes to ascertain the truth, instead of to indulge in theorizing, may convince himself that they were not madmen, and that they were sustained in their strange and painful life by many other things besides obstinacy. In the ninth century a rule of life for recluses was drawn up by a monk named Grimlaic. It is not so much an original composition as a compilation from the writings of the ancient fathers, and the traditions of the solitary life founded on the experience of centuries. It is divided into sixty-nine chapters, and is full of wisdom, and, if I may so say, of calmness and good sense.‡

Grimlaic requires in the recluse learning, discretion, and virtue—long and well tried; and he considers assiduous meditation of the Holy Scripture, and above all, frequent Communion, to be the only sure foundations and bulwarks of the solitary life.

We gather also from this rule that the *reclusorium* or voluntary prison of the solitaries was then constructed so as to hold two or three, for it was not thought good that even solitaries should live quite alone. Each had a separate cell, but a small window gave them means of communication with one another. Through this they could confer on spiritual subjects at certain hours, pray together, and even join in their scanty meals. If possible there was to be attached to each cell a little yard or garden, where they could breathe fresh air and cultivate a few plants. Another window was to look into the monastic church, so that they might take part in all the day and night offices without being seen themselves.

\*The Office is given in Bishop Lacy's *Pontifical*, and in the *Sarum Manual*. I have completed the one by a few details from the other.

†*Encycl. Metrop.* quoted by Dr Ogilvie in the *Imperial Dictionary*, sub voce Hermit.

‡ It is printed in Migne's *Patrologia*, tom. ciii, pp. 576-664. Had Tennyson read this or similar works before he wrote *St Simeon*, or Kingsley before composing his *Hermits*, the portraits would have been more real without being less picturesque.

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At this window only could they in certain cases speak with friends and strangers who came to solicit their prayers and ask for counsel. There was, moreover, an interior window that looked into a room to which their special disciples, who dwelt outside the enclosure, could have access. If the solitaries were priests, they had each a small oratory, blessed by the bishop before they were enclosed, where they might say Mass. They were each to keep their priestly vestments and altar linen very clean. Each priest had a chasuble, two albs, two amices, two stoles and maniples, two corporals, and two altar cloths.\* It will surprise some to learn that in the cell was a small bath or tub (*dolium*) supplied with water, that, as often as need was, the priest might wash and bathe. "Perhaps," says Grimlaic,† "some will say St Anthony never bathed. To such I answer shortly, if St Anthony never bathed, neither did he ever sing Mass. Hence the use of the bath is committed to the discretion of priests, that with due cleanliness they may celebrate the sacred mysteries."‡ As to the frequency of celebration, it is left to the discretion of each, though the author strongly advises daily celebration or Communion.

I will now proceed to give some details and examples regarding each of the three classes, priests, laymen and women, who practised solitary life, distinguishing when necessary between the hermit and the recluse.

I. PRIESTS—No statistics have come down to us by which to judge of the extent to which the solitary life of hermits and recluses was practised by priests in Great Britain. Incidental notices in documents lead us to believe that it was by no means rare. The porch at the east end of the north aisle of Durham Cathedral was called the Anchorage. It contained an altar where the recluse said Mass. A small chapel was built on the bridge at Cambridge, in which the Bishop of Ely granted license to say Mass, and this chapel was served in 1399 by a hermit named John Jaye.§ "The anker in the wall beside Bishopsgate, London," mentioned in an old will, was a priest, since the testator asks him to say twenty Masses for his soul.||

There may still be seen many hermitages in caves with altars cut out of the rock. That at Knaresborough in Yorkshire is very perfect. It was occupied by St Robert. Sir James Simpson mentions St Columba's on Loch Killesport, St Kieran's on Loch Kilkerran, St Ninian's on the shore of Wigtonshire, St Molaise's on Holy Island, St Margaret's at Dunfermline, St Serf's at Dysart, St Adrian's at Caplawchy, St Rule's at St Andrews.¶ King Henry V gave everything necessary for the use of the altar to a priest-anchorite at Westminster:

Jugiter inclusus fundit pro rege precatus,  
Contulit ornatus cui rex altaris ad usus.\*\*

Several of the priest-hermits are honoured as saints. One of the earliest and most famous was St Cuthbert.

Venerable Bede, who has written so much regarding St Cuthbert, does not even tell us whether that great servant of God, during his two periods of seclusion in the Island of Farne, first as monk and afterwards as bishop, ever offered the Holy Sacrifice. It is only incidentally that we learn that he had an altar in his cell; for Bede made it a rule to set down nothing for which he had no evidence, and as the Masses said by St Cuthbert had no assistants or witnesses besides the holy angels, his biographer passes by this subject, probably deeming it needless to record the mere fact of the Masses, when he could give no authentic detail

\* Cap. 49. There were clearly no "servers" of Mass. † Cap. 51.

‡ "Ideo balnearum usus in sacerdotum relinquitur arbitrio, ut mundi et digni habeantur sacra mysteria celebrare" (Cap. 51).

§ Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, i, 143-148.

|| *Test. Vetust.* p. 356.

¶ *Archæol. Essays*, i, 125, quoted by Rev. M. Walcott in *Ancient Church of Scotland*, p. 342.

\*\* *Memorials of Henry V.* p. 72 (Rolls Series).



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of their frequency or devotion. He has told of the tears which St Cuthbert shed when he celebrated in public, and that is enough for us to judge what was his piety and compunction in his hermitage.

It was certainly the tradition handed down among the monks of Durham, that their holy father Cuthbert had celebrated Mass in the hermitage of Farne, for he was believed sometimes to return to it from his heavenly glory, in order to renew mysteriously the sacred rites. In the twelfth century Cuthbert's cell was occupied for forty-two years by a hermit named Bartholomew. His biographer writes the following story :



THE ORDINATION OF ST GUTHLAC

“On the solemn night of our LORD’s Nativity, Bartholomew, having said the Midnight Mass and Lauds, after a short interval, went out to see if morning had yet dawned over the sea, in order that he might begin the second celebration. On his return he found the candleslighted and a priest of venerable aspect in the sacred vestments standing before the holy altar. As no one came to serve him, \* Bartholomew, full of joy and admiration, drew near, and after they had said the *Confiteor* to each other, they sang the introit *Lux fulgebit* and the rest in a voice of gladness and jubilation. And Bartholomew afterwards declared that in his joy he sang (*clamasse*) above his strength. When the sacred mysteries were ended the candles were extinguished without the hand of man, and the venerable priest

\* There were no inhabitants of the island besides the hermit. He seems to have expected that some heavenly server would come, but as none came, and the mysterious priest ‘stood waiting,’ he understood that he should serve.

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disappeared from sight ; nor dared the hermit ask him who he was, knowing without any doubt that he was the holy bishop Cuthbert. He told this event to Brother William, from whom I learnt it." \*

Of the Masses said by St Guthlac, a contemporary of St Cuthbert, we have somewhat fuller information, and it is given us by his disciple Felix, an eyewitness of much that he describes. Guthlac, of the Mercian royal family, was born in 673, and trained to arms. At the age of twenty-four he retired into a monastery, and after two years' training in the spiritual life he became a hermit. From the time he left the world to his death, seventeen years later, he never tasted intoxicating drink. On leaving the monastery he went to Croyland, a place then uninhabited, and in the midst of immense fens, the channels through which were known only to a few. He was accompanied by four companions. Having found a low reedy island, on which there was a barrow that had been excavated by some seekers for hidden treasure, they made this excavation their cell and oratory, covering it with a shed. Their clothing was made of the skins of beasts, and they took no food until after sunset, and then only barley bread and muddy water. When Guthlac had been a few years † in this wild spot, he received a visit from Hedda, Bishop of Winchester, who was so delighted with his conversation and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures that he begged him to receive the priesthood. Guthlac consented, and the bishop immediately consecrated the little oratory that had by this time been built, and ordained Guthlac to serve it. The canons required then, as now, that an interval should elapse between the reception of each order, but Hedda considered that he might dispense in Guthlac's case, and he conferred the various minor and major orders one after another *per saltum*, apparently in one day. He was not deceived in his expectations regarding Guthlac, who became famous for his virtues and miracles. He died at the age of forty-one, after spending fifteen years at Croyland. Some days before Easter 714, he fell very ill, but "on Easter Day," says his biographer, "rising above his sickness, he immolated the sacrifice of the LORD'S Body and the libation of His Blood, and then began to announce to his companion his approaching end. On the night of the Wednesday in Easter week he sat throughout the night in his oratory, leaning his head against the wall and looking towards the altar. From midnight to sunrise the place was illuminated as by a fire. At sunrise the man of God lifted himself up a little, saying, 'My son, get ready to depart ; it is time for me to leave this body, and my soul must pass to eternal joy.' Having thus spoken he stretched out his hand to the altar, and strengthened himself with the Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and raising his eyes to heaven and stretching out his arms he breathed forth his soul into the joys of everlasting beatitude. The brother who was present immediately saw the house filled with heavenly splendour, and a tower, as it were, of fire pass from earth to heaven, before which the sun became pale, angelic voices filled the air, and the island was perfumed with sweet odours." ‡

It is clear from this account that the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in his oratory, since he did not say Mass on the morning of his death when he communicated. § His admonition to his disciple to get ready to depart was in allusion to the instruction previously given that immediately after his death his sister, whom he would never allow to visit him, and who also led a solitary life not far off, should be summoned to take care of his burial.

\* *Vita*, cap. 4, n. 32, apud Bolland, die 24 Junii.

† Guthlac retired to Croyland in 699, at the age of twenty-six. Hedda died in 705; Guthlac was probably about thirty years old when ordained.

‡ *Vita S Guthlaci*, Boll. April, tom. 11.

§ Butler is mistaken in saying that he celebrated Mass every morning, as well as in giving his age as forty-seven. He was only forty-one.



# THE SOLITARY LIFE

St Guthlac had sought a spot remote from the habitation of men; but St Ulfric, another priest-hermit, built himself a cell contiguous to a church. He lived in the middle of the twelfth century, in a little town called Haselberg in Somersetshire. Several contemporary chroniclers have mentioned the great austerity of his life, his humility and his miracles. The following extract from Matthew Paris shows that he not only said Mass in his cell or in the adjoining church, but also exercised, occasionally at least, the office of confessor. "A man, who was thought to have made a pact with the devil and to be possessed by him, was brought to Ulfric. He took him into his inner cell and kept him there until he had moved him to true penitence, and persuaded him by a good confession to vomit out the poison which the devil had infused. When he had regained his strength, Ulfric showed him the LORD's Body in the appearance of bread, and asked him if he believed. 'I do believe,' answered the man; 'for, wretched and sinful though I am, I see the Body and Blood of my LORD in thy hands in the appearance of flesh.' The saint replied: 'Thank GOD! Let us now pray together that you may receive It in the accustomed species.' And thus he gave him Communion, and sent him away in peace."\*

Venerable Bede has given us a beautiful story of the friendship that existed in life and death between two priest-hermits, or rather between a bishop-hermit and a priest-hermit, St Cuthbert and St Herbert. The latter had built himself a cell on an island in the centre of one of the Cumberland lakes called Derwentwater:

After long exercise in social cares  
And offices humane, intent to adore  
The Deity with undistracted mind,  
And meditate on everlasting things  
In utter solitude.†

He was known, venerated, and loved by St Cuthbert, who acted as his spiritual father; yet they could seldom see each other more than once a year. In 687 Herbert had left his solitude and gone to Carlisle to meet Cuthbert, who was then bishop, and was making the visitation of his vast diocese. Cuthbert, knowing that his end was near, spoke to Herbert, as Elias to Eliseus, bidding him ask some grace or favour, as this would be their last meeting on earth. Herbert fell at his feet, and begged with tears that he might not survive his holy friend and guide. "You know," he said, "that I have always studied to live according to your direction, and if from ignorance or infirmity I have in any point failed, I have taken pains to chastise myself and amend my fault according to the decision of your will." The bishop prayed, and told him that his request was granted. Herbert received his purification by a severe illness, so that dying the same day and hour as St Cuthbert, March 20, 687, they passed together into the joys of heaven.‡ In 1374, Thomas de Appleby, Bishop of Carlisle, reading this history in Venerable Bede, was so touched by this incident that he issued a mandate to the vicar of Crossthwaite, in which parish Derwentwater was, that, on the anniversary of the death of St Cuthbert and St Herbert, he should go with his parishioners to the island and cause the Mass of St Cuthbert to be sung there, granting an indulgence of forty days to all who should be present.§

II. LAYMEN—From the nature of the case, such occasional incidents as the above will be all that is known of men who lived and died in solitude. There is, however, one great exception. A lay-hermit named Godric lived in a place

\* Matt. Paris, ad annum 1154.

† Wordsworth, *Poem on St Herbert*.

‡ Bede, *Hist.* iv, 29.

§ The document is given in Nicolson and Burns's *History of Westmoreland and Cumberland*, vol. II, app. x, p. 529.

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called Finchale, a few miles from Durham. During the last years of his life he was attended by a monk from the abbey named Reginald, who not only carefully noted all that he saw, but gathered from the old man in repeated conversations almost the whole story of his life. There is no book that gives a more vivid and interesting picture of England in the twelfth century than Reginald's *Life of St Godric*.\*

Godric was born in Norfolk in the latter half of the eleventh century. Beginning life as an itinerant merchant, he travelled into many countries, as Scotland, Flanders, and Denmark, becoming partner in a ship, and at last captain. In all his travels he was accustomed to pray and to invoke the various saints whose churches he visited. He made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to St James of Compostella, and two to Rome. The sight of Lindisfarne and the memory of St Cuthbert inspired him with desire of a hermit's life. To prepare himself for it he went to Carlisle, and there frequented the churches, being the first to enter in the morning, the last to leave at night. He learnt by heart the whole of a manual of Latin psalms and hymns that was known as the Psalter of St Jerome, though it appears that he did not understand the Latin tongue. During his eremitical life he was accustomed daily to recite these psalms and prayers, dividing them into seven portions like the canonical hours, and God rewarded his assiduity by the gift of great and infused knowledge, of extraordinary devotion and sublime contemplation. Nothing can be more beautiful than the picture drawn by his biographer of his life and virtues, revelations and marvellous graces. Unfortunately for my purpose, Reginald is only intent on what is extraordinary, or, at least, what is unknown to those whom he addresses, and he gives no detail regarding divine worship or the reception of the sacraments. Thus he says nothing of Godric's Communion when a youth, and as a merchant; we may suppose that, like most of his countrymen at that date, he communicated about thrice in the year. But it does seem strange that one who delighted, as he did when at Carlisle, in frequenting the churches day and night, should have gone deliberately and by free choice to live for years in an utter solitude, where he could neither take part in an assembly of the faithful, nor even cross the threshold of a church or receive a sacrament. We see the same phenomenon in the lives of many other solitaires, as St Paul and St Anthony in early days; and yet we know the deep reverence they had for the Holy Eucharist. St Augustine has well said that that Sacrament may be honoured by devout frequentation or devout abstention; one thing only It cannot bear—neglect and contempt.

And St Francis of Sales reminds us that there is something higher still than keeping our LORD company, viz., the accomplishment of His Will, a truth that he illustrates from the history of the great hermit, St John the Baptist, who, as the friend of the Bridegroom, would fain have kept always in the company of his Beloved and so have rejoiced to hear the Bridegroom's voice; yet to fulfil his austere vocation remained long away from His presence and far from the sound of His voice.

This will explain the conduct of St Godric, who, when sufficiently prepared by his devotion and studies at Carlisle, withdrew into a great forest near Wolsingham in County Durham, living on wild apples and nuts and performing great austerities. Wandering through the forest he found another hermit, named Ælfric, an old man with whom he took up his abode and under whom he studied the secrets of the solitary life. He lived more than two years in this remote spot utterly unvisited. Neither he nor his companion (who had been a lay brother)

\* *Vita S Godrici*, edited in 1847 by Mr Stevenson for the Surtees Society.



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ever assisted at Mass or received sacraments, so far as we can gather from Reginald's narrative. Yet most certainly they abstained neither through contempt nor through error in faith, for, when Ælfric fell dangerously ill, Godric went in search of a priest, begging him to bring the old man the Holy Viaticum; "and so he departed out of life with all the rites of Holy Church." After Ælfric's death Godric went again on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and on his return to England resided as a hermit for a short time at Eskedale near Whitby. His presence displeased the lord of the soil, and he left this hermitage and went to Durham, where he became a kind of sacristan in St Giles's Church, and though about forty years old, he even sat on the benches with the children of St Mary's school. There he learnt by heart the whole Psalter and many hymns and prayers, and practised works of mercy and almsgiving. Being moved to return to the solitary life, he obtained leave from the Bishop of Durham and also the grant of a small piece of land on the banks of the Wear at Finchale, a few miles from Durham. This was in 1110, and there he lived for sixty years practising the greatest austerities, and doing immense good to the bodies and souls of the people who came to visit him. He encountered, however, for several years, opposition and persecution from the rude peasants who looked on him as an intruder, but, by unalterable sweetness and charity, rather than by the mere fame of austerity, he gained their affections and admiration. During the sixty years he resided at Finchale, three times only he left his hermitage, and that in the first year of his residence; once on the Christmas night to hear Mass at Durham, a second time to receive Communion on Easter Day, and a third at the urgent request of the bishop. After some years he was taken under the special charge of the monks of Durham, who served his hermitage; and it is by means of the love and admiration they bore him, especially Reginald, who was for several years his confessor, that we know the details of his marvellous life.

At first he built himself a small hut of boughs, which he called St Mary's Chapel, but the people made him build afterwards a little stone church which he dedicated to St John the Baptist, and which was joined by a cloister to the wooden oratory of our Lady. In his church was an altar with steps to it, a beam supporting a crucifix with statues of the Blessed Virgin and St John; and on this beam were placed the cruets, chalice, and a box with altar-breads. Mass was said for him every Sunday and festival, when the people from the neighbourhood and visitors from a distance were allowed to assist, so that sometimes his little church was crowded to overflowing.

In later years he received Communion, preceded by confession, every Sunday, and, when drawing near his end, every second and third day. He would never speak to anyone except his confessor on the mornings when he was about to communicate.

Reginald tells us how he would kneel in prayer through nearly the whole night on the steps of his altar, and Reginald supposes that his readers will know (for he does not tell them) that these prayers were addressed to our LORD JESUS CHRIST sacramentally there present. That which he has not stated explicitly he puts beyond all question by two circumstances, related quite incidentally. Reginald is describing the inroad made by the Scotch which ended in the Battle of the Standard at Northallerton. Though the Scotch were led by King David, who was a saint, and a saint especially devout to the Blessed Sacrament, yet some of his soldiers, and notably the Galwegians, were, according to unimpeachable testimony, little better than their heathen ancestors. These miscreants in their course came to St Godric in his hermitage. They

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treated the poor hermit most brutally, and "ferocious in heart," says Reginald, "and degenerate in faith, they rushed into his church and plundered whatever was of value, *trampling the Eucharist under their filthy feet*, and crushing the offletes (unconsecrated altar-breads) into pieces." \* This happened in 1138, and Godric died in 1170; we learn then that for more than thirty years Godric had the privilege of keeping the Blessed Sacrament in the pyx over his altar. The second mention of the Blessed Sacrament is in recording how Godric raised a girl to life at the prayer of her parents, and made them swear on the Holy Eucharist that they would not tell during his lifetime what he had done. †

In spite of his terrible austerities, Godric lived to be more than a hundred years old. For several years before his death he was confined to his bed, but we must not picture to ourselves a patient in a modern hospital, carefully tended by trained nurses. Godric simply lay on a few planks in his little church opposite to his altar, unable to rise and almost to turn without assistance, but conversing day and night with Him who had Himself when on earth "spent the night in prayer on the mountain side," ‡ who had hung with His mangled limbs on the hard bed of the Cross, and who was now watching day and night with His faithful servant in the mystery of His love.

The grotesque picture of St Anthony's temptation, on which so many artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries exercised their ingenuity, and which are still to be seen in many galleries throughout Europe, have created an impression on the minds of most of us that the solitaries were always engaged in ghostly combat or assailed by fearful phantoms, probably the creation of their own brains disordered by over-fasting and want of sleep. There are certainly in the history of St Godric not wanting elements of this nature, though he who has meditated on our LORD's temptations in the desert will be slow in speaking of the similar trials of those who imitated Him in that portion of His life, as mere delusions of the imagination. After Satan's departure the angels came and ministered to our LORD, and so was it with His servants. I will illustrate this by relating what occurred to St Godric in his last illness, and I shall translate literally from Reginald.

"I asked him one day," says Reginald, "what saint's Mass he would wish to hear. He replied, 'I have already heard to-day the Mass of the Holy Trinity, and have received Communion from the hand of a man dressed in white. He came down from heaven and returned thither, and went through all the holy rites just as you are wont to do; and taking the Eucharist reverently from the altar, he counselled and persuaded me to make a confession of all that I could remember, and I do not believe that I forgot anything whatever of all my past excesses; and when I had obtained absolution for my sins, I received from his hand the holy things of God (*sancta Domini*), and then he gave me his blessing. When the mysteries were concluded, he raised his hands and was carried up into heaven, leaving behind him an odour of great sweetness.' When he had related all this, he added: 'Do you think, my son, that I should still receive discipline' (i.e., confession) 'and communion from you?' I replied that I dared not give them after what had happened. Then he said: 'I think the grace of CHRIST will not forsake me, and the virtue of the HOLY GHOST will protect me.' I asked him what saint he thought it was; he answered that he thought he was like St Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. 'He who opens

\* P. 114.

† P. 134. Eadmer in his *Historia Novorum*, lib. 11, relates another instance of an oath taken on the Blessed Sacrament by the Archbishop of Benevento

to Emma, the mother of St Edward. [It was undoubtedly a common practice in Anglo-Saxon times.]

‡ Luke vi, 12.



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and closes as he will the gates of heaven came to me at dawn, and sat here and strengthened me; but when you knocked at the door he departed.' And he told me that he had come by command of our LORD JESUS CHRIST to visit His servant and absolve him from his sins. 'Do you then,' continued Godric, 'celebrate for me a Mass of the Blessed Virgin, that by her intercession our LORD JESUS CHRIST may be propitious to us.' I, therefore, did as he bade me, glorifying and praising the LORD in all His wonders towards His beloved servant."\*

This slight sketch of the history of St Godric must suffice for an account of the lay hermits, though I am, of course, very far from pretending that they were all heroic like him.

III. WOMEN—We have seen that the sister of St Guthlac lived in a hermitage in the fens. So, too, the sister of St Godric, named Burchwine, imitated her holy brother, and spent several years in a hermitage not far from Finchale, though she only came occasionally to his oratory in order to hear Mass.† The eremitical life, however, was not well suited to women, and was rarely followed by them. On the other hand, the number of female recluses was very great. Hence, bishops were wont at various times to draw up special rules for their conduct, and more than one ascetic treatise was written for their benefit. Regulations were made regarding them by St Richard of Chichester,‡ and St Ælred addressed to his sister, who was a recluse, a letter in which he enters fully into the duties and the dangers of their manner of life.§

The more common ankerhold or reclusery was a small house of one or two cells built against the chancel of a church, with a low window looking towards the high altar, through which the anchoress could take part in the Mass and Office, and also receive Communion. An entry in the churchwardens' accounts of St Margaret's Westminster, in 1538, is as follows: "Paid to my Lady Ancress for washing all the corporas clothes 8d." This indicates one little occupation of these holy women. But St Richard forbade that the care of the church vestments should be given to them, since he wished to reduce as much as possible communication with the outside world. St Ælred mentions and disapproves the custom of some anchoresses of teaching a class of little girls through the window of their cell. Indeed there is no use in concealing the fact that the special danger of these recluses was that of becoming gossips through the multitude of pious but talkative people who resorted to the outside window of their cells. But while admitting this danger, about which their spiritual advisers were very explicit, I do not believe there is any evidence of serious evil; but on the contrary, there are abundant proofs that the institution of female recluses was a subject of great edification to Catholic England. Were it otherwise, we should not find so many shrewd as well as pious people leaving sums of money for their support.||

A treatise written in English in the thirteenth century tells the recluses: "When ye are quite dressed, sprinkle yourselves with holy water, which ye should have always with you, and think upon God's Flesh and on His Blood, which is over the high altar, and fall on your knees toward It with this salutation:

\* *Vita S. Godrici*, p. 211.

† Reginald, p. 140. ‡ Wilkins, i, 693.

§ This treatise was often attributed to St Augustine of Hippo, and had great authority. It will be found in the Appendix to his works.

|| Henry II by his will left legacies to the recluses of Jerusalem, England and Normandy. Walter de

Suffield, Bishop of Norwich, who died in 1257, left gifts to ankers in his diocese, especially to his niece, Ela, in the reclusory at Massingham. (*Blomefield's Norfolk*, ii, 347-8). St Richard of Chichester made several similiar donations by his will, which is printed accurately with notes in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, i, 164.

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Ave principium nostræ creationis!  
Ave pretium nostræ redemptionis!  
Ave viaticum nostræ peregrinationis!  
Ave præmium nostræ expectationis!

Tu esto nostrum gaudium  
Qui es futurus præmium.  
Sit nostra in te gloria  
Per cuncta semper sæcula.  
Mane nobiscum Domine,  
Noctem obscuram remove,  
Omne delictum ablue,  
Piam medelam tribue.  
Gloria tibi Domine,  
Qui natus es de Virgine, etc.

Thus shall ye do also when the priest elevates It in the Mass, and before the *Confiteor* when you are about to be houseled.\*

The same author gives the following instruction regarding Communion:

“Men esteem a thing as less dainty when they have it often and therefore ye should be, as lay brethren are, partakers of the Holy Communion only fifteen times a year: at Midwinter, Candlemas, Twelfth Day; on Sunday half-way between that and Easter; on our Lady’s Day, if it be near the Sunday, because of its being a holiday; Easter Day; the third Sunday thereafter; Holy Thursday, (i.e., the Ascension); Whit Sunday, and Midsummer Day; St Mary Magdalen’s Day; the Assumption; the Nativity (of the Blessed Virgin); St Michael’s Day; All Saints’ Day; St Andrew’s Day. And before all these days, see that ye make a full confession and undergo discipline; and forego your pittance for one day. And if anything happens out of the usual order, so that ye may not have been houseled at these set times, ye may make up for it the Sunday next following, or if the other set time is near, ye may wait till then.”†

Matthew Paris tells us that in 1225, in the town of Leicester, there died a recluse who for seven years before her death never tasted food except that on Sundays she received Communion of the Body and Blood of the LORD. When this miracle was related to Hugh Wallis, Bishop of Lincoln, he did not believe it. He therefore ordered the recluse should be strictly guarded for fifteen days by priests and clerics, until it was found that in all that time she took no nourishment. Her face was bright as a lily, yet with a ruddy tint, a sign of her virginal purity.‡

A similar story to this is related by Lawrence of Durham, a writer of the twelfth century. A girl was then living in the south of England in her father’s house, who for twenty years had tasted no food, but a little water. She received Communion every Sunday.§ A third example is recorded by Thomas Waldensis as having occurred in his own time, about two centuries later. “In the northern part of England,” he says, “called Norfolk, which is very rich both in spiritual and temporal things, there lately lived a devout Christian girl, commonly called Jane the Meatless, because she was proved never to have tasted meat nor drink for fifteen years, but only fed with the greatest joy every Sunday on the Sacrament of the LORD’s Body. And what is most marvellous, she could distinguish a consecrated host from unconsecrated ones among a thousand breads all alike. And what many thought even more wonderful still, she did this not only by divine inspiration, but by a certain sagacity of her sense,

\* *Ancren Riecle*, p. 16 (Camden Society).

† *Ib.* p. 413.

‡ *Historia*, p. 327, ed. Wats.

§ In his *Life of St Brigid*, apud Boll. *Acta SS.* Feb.

tom. 1, p. 174.



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since she had such a horror of all bodily food, that she could not tolerate its taste or smell, and turned from it even at a distance.”\*

Before leaving this subject I would willingly have given an account of a kind of hermits of whom we read much in the Middle Ages—I mean the unfortunate lepers. But, however interesting is this subject in itself, there is not sufficient connexion with the Blessed Sacrament to justify me were I to enter into any detail. Some ecclesiological writers maintain that the low windows so often found in the chancel of parish churches were used, in part at least, for giving Communion to lepers.† This may have been the case, though there is no evidence offered of the fact. From an early date lepers had been specially committed to the care of the bishops,‡ and Pope Gregory II, in a letter to St Boniface, had declared that they were not to be refused Holy Communion. When the disease—or those forms of disease that were called leprosy—spread more widely in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, leper-houses were erected all over the land, and the lepers were licensed by the third council of Lateran (A.D. 1179) to have their own chaplains. The foundation or maintenance of leper-houses was a favourite form of charity, and for those who were capable of heroic virtue there was no species of self-denial more recommended and more tenderly practised than personal service of those afflicted with this loathsome malady. In doing this the devout were sustained by the thought of our LORD JESUS CHRIST as described by Isaias: “Despised and the most abject of men . . . and as it were a leper and one struck by God and afflicted.” He whose passion is thus recorded beforehand has instituted a special rite for its commemoration; and among the countless graces of the Holy Eucharist we must count as by no means the least, the grace poured into the souls of poor lepers and outcasts to bear their trials, and the grace given to the pious to alleviate them.

We have thus seen that He who is the centre of communion to the faithful, and who is the bond of minds and hearts when men gather together in church for public worship, was also the chief object of devotion and love to those who, following the divine vocation, had left all in the world to live the life of solitaries in austerities and penance, that thus they might hold close communion with God. With JESUS CHRIST in the Blessed Sacrament, they found the most direct means to this union, with Him they found companionship which compensated them for the society they had foregone. From Him they drew consolation and strength to persevere in their painful life, grace to advance in the way of perfection, while some reached so high a degree of sanctity that their fame went abroad amongst men, and the world they had left behind now followed them to their seclusion. Nothing then could be more false than to compare such men to Indian gymnosophists. They chose solitude and austerity not from pride and ambition of human glory, but from humility and love of JESUS CHRIST, and they used their influence and the honour in which they were held not to draw to themselves sterile admiration, but to draw hearts to God and to one another, sometimes, like St John, rebuking the cruel and the unjust, but more willingly, like him, saying to the people: “He that hath two coats let him give to him that hath none, and he that hath meat let him do in like manner.”§

\* *Doctrin. Fidei*, II, 376; De Euch. cap. 62.

† They were sometimes the windows of the recluses, whose cell was built outside.

‡ See 5th Council of Orleans, A.D. 549, and 3rd of Lyons, A.D. 583.

§ No document throws a more interesting sidelight upon the prevalence of leprosy in England at the close of the twelfth century than the *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, printed in the Rolls Series. The translation of the Carthusian *Life of St Hugh of*

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## CHAPTER III. SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

### I. *Schools*

CATHOLIC England was well supplied with schools, village, communal, cathedral, monastic, and at a later period with what were called grammar schools. Education was accessible to all, for it was in almost all cases gratuitous, so that the epithet poor was constantly associated with the name of scholar. Men of birth, who gloried in the lance and sword, often affected to despise the pen as belonging to the low-born and the vulgar; and from instances of such proud and voluntary ignorance has arisen the popular modern error that to read and write were rare accomplishments in the Middle Ages.\*

There were very few schools corresponding to what we call "boarding" schools, and as the scholars lived in their own houses a domestic chapel seldom formed part of a scholastic foundation. The great establishments of William of Wykeham at Winchester, and of Henry VI at Eton, will occur at once as exceptions. Schoolboys, however, were expected to hear Mass daily, as is evident from many passages in our old writers. Thus in the *Young Children's Book*, the boy is taught:

"Arise betime out of thy bed—And bless thy breast and thy forehead,—Then wash thy hands and thy face—Comb thy head, and ask God grace—Thee to help in all thy werks—Thou shalt speed better whatso thou carps.†—Then go to the church and hear a Mass,—There ask mercy for thy trespass."‡

The history of Wykeham furnishes an illustration of the care with which young scholars were taught to assist at Mass in their parish churches before assembling for study. The illustrious bishop of Winchester, when a boy, used to be present daily at the Mass that a monk named Peeke said at an early hour at an altar of our Lady against a pillar in the nave of the cathedral. And William of Wykeham ever retained so affectionate a memory of those early Masses of his boyhood, that he chose that very place for his burial and chantry chapel. At the first foundation of his grammar school he required that on Sundays the scholars should assist at the Masses and all the offices, at the parish church of St John-on-the-Hill. If anyone was absent he lost his commons for fifteen days.§ At a later period the chapel was built which still exists.

We find that King Henry VI, in 1444 and the following years, frequently assisted at Mass in this chapel, and made generous offerings towards its adornment, at one time giving a gold chalice and cruets, at another leaving his robe with sable borders to the Blessed Virgin. He gave also a tabernacle or triptych

*Lincoln*, edited for the Quarterly Series in 1898, may also be consulted (See *ib.* pp. 202-205 and 612-613). The interesting fact is that the rigid seclusion enforced and sanctioned by the Church was practically successful in stamping out the disease in England before the close of the fifteenth century. At that epoch there were hardly any patients to fill the commodious lazaret-houses which had been built by the charity of an earlier age. Many of these establishments were consequently, with full episcopal sanction, diverted to other uses. This fact alone suffices to show the absurdity of the contention that leprosy was caused and propagated by the fish-eating inculcated by the Catholic Church in peni-

tential seasons. See *The Month*, Oct., 1903; *Tablet*, Feb., 1906.

\* See Buckingham's excellent and learned work, *The Bible in the Middle Ages*, chapter, "Libraries and Schools." Mr Furnivall, in his *Education in Early England* (Trübner, 1867), has treated of the education of the upper classes. [As was to be expected, the literature dealing with our pre-Reformation schools has grown considerably since Fr Bridgett wrote this chapter, but it would be useless to attempt to give a bibliography here.]

† Whatever thou mayest urge to the contrary.

‡ *The Babe's Book*, p. 17 (E. E. T. Society).

§ *Life of Wykeham*, by Dr Lowth, Appendix x.



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of gold to the high altar, besides large sums of money.\* It is interesting that to the present day the foundation scholars uncover their heads passing through the quadrangle outside the chapel, a custom taught by William of Wykeham in honour of the Blessed Sacrament.

The masters of the grammar schools were frequently chantry-priests, and to celebrate daily Mass in a neighbouring church was one of their duties. Their scholars would probably be expected to be present at this Mass. Thus at Stratford-on-Avon, in the school where Shakespeare was educated, the master, previous to the Reformation, was a priest and one of the five prefects of the Gild of the Holy Cross. On feast days he said Mass in the parish church, at the altar of St John Baptist, for the good estate of the Bishop of Worcester and for certain persons deceased; on other days he said Mass in the Gild chapel adjoining the school. Before the *Lavabo* he turned to the people saying, "Ye shall pray specially for the souls of Master Thomas Joliffe, John and Joan, his father and mother, the souls of all brethren and sistern of this Gild, and all Christian souls, saying of your charity a *Pater* and an *Ave*." On Wednesdays and Fridays, after Mass, the master and scholars sang together an Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin and recited the *De Profundis*.†

In the Statutes of Dean Colet's school (St Paul's, London),‡ it is prescribed: "There shall be also in the school a priest, that daily as he can be disposed shall sing Mass in the chapel of the school, and pray for the children to prosper in good life and good literature, to the honour of God and our LORD CHRIST JESUS." It appears that not all the boys were present at this Mass, since directions were given that the children in the school, when they heard the sacring-bell ring, were to kneel on the forms.§

It was the duty of this priest, who was not the head master of the school, to teach the children "the catechyzon and instruction of the articles of the faith and the ten commandments in English." Among these instructions is the following: "If I fall to sin I shall anon rise again by penance and pure confession; and as often as I shall receive my LORD in Sacrament, I shall with all study dispose me to pure cleanliness and devotion. When I shall die I shall call for sacraments and rites of CHRIST's Church betimes, and be confessed and receive my LORD and Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST."|| Among the precepts of living is "use oft times confession." It was for this school that Erasmus wrote his *Christiani Hominis Institutio*, in which occur similar sentiments.

Another statute of Colet regarded the popular institution of the boy-bishop. "All these children," he says, "shall every Childermas Day come to St Paul's Church to hear the child-bishop's sermon, and after be at High Mass, and each of them to offer a penny to the child-bishop, and with them the masters and surveyors of the school."¶ It is well known that on the feast of the Holy Innocents (Childermas Day), or in some places on the feast of St Nicholas, a boy was appointed to preach and even to preside at the offices in the church. In the statutes of Eton, Winchester and King's College, Cambridge, Mass was specially excepted. But at St Paul's the boy appears to have occupied the bishop's throne while Mass was celebrated. These customs were abolished by a proclamation of Henry VIII in the twenty-third year of his reign, but

\* Lowth, *Life of Wykeham*, Appendix XIII. [There are now later and fuller works upon William of Wykeham and his foundations. See, e.g., those of G. H. Moberly and M. E. Walcott.]

† See *Gentleman's Magazine*, Feb. 1835, and *Colletanea Topographica*, III, 81-83.

‡ There had been a school at St Paul's from time immemorial. It was already ancient in the days of Henry I. Colet enlarged and refounded it.

§ Knight, *Life of Colet*, p. 306. [Cf. the more recent *Life of Dean Colet*, by J. H. Lupton.]

|| *Ib.* p. 382.

¶ *Ib.* p. 308.

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restored under Mary, for they were as greatly relished by the Catholics as they were intensely hated by the morose heretics of those days.\*

Among the Gild statutes published by Mr Toulmin Smith are those of a gild of young scholars, established in 1383 at Lynn. They took for their patron the boy-martyr, St William, and kept six lights burning on festivals before his statue in St Margaret's Church. If a member died, the rest assisted at his funeral and had twenty-four Masses said for his soul. Their "general day" was the feast of the Holy Relics, when all were expected to assist at a solemn Mass of the feast, and then at a Requiem for deceased members.†

## II. Universities

As regards the Catholic Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, I much regret that, in the words of Mr Anstey in his Introduction to the *Munimenta Academica*, "to a great extent all means of actually reproducing medieval life have perished," "all details of life are utterly lost."‡ Both universities have contended for a fabulous antiquity, and though schools existed and were much frequented both at Oxford and Cambridge in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, yet no royal charter or letter is known earlier than the reign of Henry III. The number of scholars has also been much exaggerated.§ They were certainly more numerous than they are at the present day, yet it is scarcely possible that in the thirteenth century the students numbered 30,000 at Oxford, as was stated to the Pope by Richard of Armagh.|| Mr Anstey thinks the largest number of scholars, properly so-called, present at one time would be 6,000, with perhaps as many more "members of the privilege." Many colleges were founded consisting of fellows and scholars. These colleges did not open their rooms, as at present, to a large number of students called "pensioners," i.e., students who pay (not receive) a pension, and are not on the foundation. At first these dwelt in lodgings, and at a later period resided in halls. In another point the medieval differed much from our present universities. The undergraduates were often very young and frequented the schools for many years. They were also in a far greater degree derived from the humbler classes.

I cannot do better than transcribe the page in which Mr Anstey sums up the results of his investigations as to the matter with which I am now occupied, that of devotion to the Holy Eucharist. "On one important subject," he says, "we are strangely and wholly without information of a direct kind—whether any regular attendance at divine service was required or not from the junior members of the university. There is no statute requiring it, but as to graduates, many statutes require that they must attend without exception, and the omission of any mention of the juniors would seem to imply that it was taken for granted they should accompany their masters. The halls, so far as we know, were not usually provided with chapels, those existing in halls at present standing being of comparatively recent erection; the religious houses, of course, had their own chapels for their scholars, as also had the colleges, but the ordinary

\* See Warton's *History of Poetry*, i, 248, ii, 375, iii, 390, and Hampson's *Medii Ævi Kalendarium*, i, 78. This celebration must not be confounded with the Feast of Fools, so indignantly denounced by Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln. See *antea*, p. 79.

† *English Gilds*, p. 51 (E. E. T. Society).

‡ *Munimenta Academica*, edited by Rev. H. Anstey, p. 61 (Rolls Series, 1868.)

§ [Mr Rashdall, after full discussion, arrives at the conclusion that the student population of Oxford during the Middle Ages at no time exceeded 3,000,

and were probably always much below it. *Universities*, ii, p. 584.]

|| Matthew Paris, writing of the year 1209 says: "Three thousand clerics, including masters and scholars, retired from Oxford, so that not one remained of the whole university. Some went to Cambridge, some to Reading. Oxford was left empty." (*Historia*, p. 228, ed. Wats.) Could the number have increased tenfold in a century? Yet both Richard of Armagh and Gascoigne compute the number at 30,000 in 1348, before the great plagues.



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students must have had ample provision for their presence in the numerous parish churches of the town, which we know from several scattered notices were the object of peculiar regard to the scholars. Their determinations used to take place in them until it was forbidden, and the scholars were in the habit of celebrating the festival days of the patron saints of their several churches,\* dancing disguised with masks and crowned with garlands of leaves and flowers, a practice which, originating in the *esprit de corps* of the several *nations*, gave rise to the frequent riots and violation of the peace, and was very early attempted to be suppressed by penal statutes." Mr Anstey adds that, "although no mention is made of daily devotions" (for the undergraduates), "the whole spirit of the university forbids us to suppose they were not compulsory."†

It is related of St Edmund Rich, that when he was at Oxford he used to confess every day, and though not in Holy Orders, yet when Master of Arts he every day heard Mass and said the hours before lecture, and taught his pupils to do the same.‡ Whether this is to be taken as a confirmation of Mr Anstey's conjectures that the scholars heard Mass with the graduates, or whether it is an exception proving that such was not the general rule, will depend on the intention of the narrator. It seems to me that the stress is laid not on St Edmund's taking his pupils to hear Mass, but on his leading them to say with him the Divine Office before the Mass began or at its conclusion, previously to their all going together to the lecture-room.

Later statutes certainly require the presence of both graduates and undergraduates at Mass, and there is nothing in them to make us suppose that a new discipline was being introduced. We may take as an example the Statutes of Canterbury Hall, at Oxford, drawn up by Archbishop Islip in 1362. In these it is ordered that every day there must be Mass of the Blessed Trinity and of the Blessed Virgin, if it can be done conveniently, though the Mass "of the day" must not be omitted for the sake of them.§ On Sundays and festivals Mass with music (*cum notâ*) at which all the fellows must be present; on greater doubles, matins and vespers and Mass will be solemnly sung, and all the fellows must be present in white surplices. All priests when they celebrate must say, except on solemn feasts, for the archbishop and his predecessors, the prayer *Deus qui inter apostolicos sacerdotes*, etc. Those who do not celebrate must say every day for them fifty "Hail Mary's" with "Our Father" and "Creed," as

\* [Much interesting information regarding the Calendars of the great medieval universities may be obtained from Mr Christopher Wordsworth, *Ancient Kalendar of the University of Oxford*, published by the Oxford Historical Society, 1904.]

† Introduction, pp. 75, 76. [Mr Hastings Rashdall, who in his *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* has gone pretty fully into the subject, expresses a view which does not altogether accord with Mr Anstey's. He says for example: "In earlier times it appears quite plain that the average student did not attend Mass or any other religious service before going to lecture. It is recorded as a piece of extraordinary piety in canonized saints that they were in the habit of hearing Mass at an early hour. Then the University of Oxford, in petitioning (c. 1245) for the canonization of St Edmund Rich, expressly says that he attended Mass before lecture *supra morem tunc legentium*. . . . Among scholars, as in the community generally, church-going seems to have increased in the later Middle Ages. But attendance was not compulsory. Even in colleges the earlier Statutes enjoin attendance at church and chapel only

on Sundays, Holidays and Vigils. At Oxford the Statutes of New College (A.D. 1400) are the first which require a daily attendance at Mass; but towards the end of the fifteenth century we find that daily Mass was enforced even in the unendowed Halls. Such attendance, however, was not necessarily before morning lecture." Rashdall, *Universities*, II, pp. 651-652. It is, however, possible that the reason why daily Mass is not insisted upon in the earlier statutes is because the rule would have been extremely difficult to enforce so long as each college did not possess its own chapel. The Statutes of the Oxford Halls drawn up at a later date (c. 1485) under the eye of the Masters and Principals are at any rate quite explicit on the subject of daily Mass, and they add to it the serious obligation of attendance at matins and vespers: "Item quod quilibet infra aulam existens cotidie audiat missam et dicat matutinas et vespers secundum exigenciam sui ordinis vel conditionis, sub pena oboli." Rashdall, II, p. 768.]

‡ *Chronicon de Melsa*, I, 439 (Rolls Series).

§ [Upon all these points Mr Wordsworth's *Ancient Kalendar of Oxford* supplies useful information.]

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is the custom. There was also a chaplain who had to celebrate early every morning for the scholars.\*

The reference made by Mr Anstey to the rival celebrations of the different nations (i.e., not only the English, Welsh, Scotch and Irish, but the Northern English and Southern English) proves the unnatural prominence that abuses acquire in history over quiet, orderly and daily usage. Nothing has come down to us about the daily or even the Sunday Masses but these extraordinary celebrations have been recorded for all future ages because they had to be suppressed. It was not however forbidden to have celebrated, in the church of the parish where a student or master might live, the feast of a saint of his native diocese, but it was forbidden to invite friends from other parishes, lest these celebrations should assume a character of rivalry and defiance, and give rise to factions. The dances were prohibited under pain of excommunication.†

From the numerous documents collected by Mr Anstey we find that the Mass of the Holy Ghost was solemnly celebrated, in the presence of the whole University of Oxford, at the beginning of each academical year, at Michaelmas, and again at its close. The Regents were also bound to be present several times a year at solemn Masses for benefactors, generally in St Mary's but sometimes in other churches. If a member of the University died in Oxford, the Chancellor, Proctors and Masters assisted at his funeral and made an offering at the Mass. They did not consider themselves bound to this if the scholar was a monk, though they sometimes did it, with a protest against precedent. Religious had of course the suffrages of the Order to which they belonged.

Many of these old documents bear witness to the beautiful spirit of gratitude that animated the University and the colleges. They continued to offer the Holy Sacrifice for their deceased founders and benefactors for centuries after their decease; and their fidelity to this duty, though pure and disinterested, proved to be also excellent policy, for the hope of such suffrages brought them many a benefaction. Out of a vast number of documents illustrating this spirit of gratitude I select a few specimens. In the very first statute (date 1292) of the oldest college in Oxford—University College—it is decreed that at the beginning of each term a Mass be celebrated for all benefactors of every kind.‡ In the statutes of the same college (in 1311) it is provided that every scholar shall cause two Masses to be offered for his founder in the parish where he resides, for as yet there were no college chapels.§

Chests were established by benefactors for loans to poor scholars. It was always appointed that those who borrowed should say five *Paters* and five *Aves* for their benefactors; and in some cases it was added that the borrower, if not a priest, should say the Office of the Dead with three Nocturns, and if a priest a Mass of Requiem within eight days.||

At first a chaplain had been appointed by the University of Oxford to say Masses for benefactors. At a later period the duties of chaplain were annexed to the office of librarian of the University. The first founder of a university library at Oxford, as distinct from a collegiate one, was Thomas Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, in 1320, from whom it was called Cobham's Library. "The Librarian was also called Chaplain to the University, and as such was ordered in 1412 to offer Masses yearly for those who were benefactors of the University Library, and was endowed with half a mark yearly, as well as with £5, issuing from the assize of bread and ale, which had been granted to the

\* Wilkins, t. 1, p. 56.

† *Munimenta*, 1, 18.

‡ *Ib.* 1, 59.

§ *Ib.* 1, 89.

|| *Ib.* 1, 85, 298, 343. [See further an article by J. W. Clark in *Proc. and Com. of the Camb. Antiq. Soc.*, Vol. xi.]



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University by King Henry IV, who was also a principal contributor to the completion of the Library, and is therefore to this day," says Mr Macray, "duly remembered at the Bidding Prayer at all the academic *Commemorationes Solenniores*. But no trace remains," he adds, "of the devotional and sacred duties once attaching to the office of librarian, and laymen have been eligible to it from the time of Bodley's refoundation."\*

After an existence of more than 200 years the Library was pillaged and wasted by the visitors of Edward VI in 1550, and the very shelves and stalls sold for what they would fetch, so that when after half a century of desolation Bodley made his magnificent foundation, he had to remind the University that "there had been heretofore a public library in Oxford, which you know is apparent by the room itself remaining and by your statute records."†

But to go back to Catholic times. For the benefactors of the Library, the librarian said every quarter three Masses of the Holy Ghost and one of the Requiem, besides the more solemn Masses for notable benefactors at which the University assisted. At a certain time of the year the chaplain went round all the schools, and, reading out a list of deceased benefactors, exhorted the scholars to pray for their souls. To be placed on this bede-roll was considered a great privilege.

Among commemorations of benefactors, one was remarkable for the place in which the Holy Sacrifice was offered. Henry VII visited the College of St Mary Magdalen in 1486, and in memory of this visit and his benefactions, Mass was offered every May-day morning at an early hour for the welfare (and after death for the repose) of his soul, on the top of the beautiful tower of the college chapel.‡

There were other solemn commemorations besides those of benefactors. In a riot some students had been slain by townsmen. To atone for this the Mayor of Oxford, the bailiffs, and sixty of the principal citizens were bound annually to assist at a Requiem for their souls in the Church of St Mary's, and each to offer one penny after the Gospel, forty pence of which was immediately distributed to poor scholars, the remainder going to the curate of the church.§

All the foregoing illustrations of university life have been taken from the history of Oxford. That of Cambridge presents features exactly similar. Yet affection for my own Alma Mater will not allow me to pass to another subject without a glance at what she was in her Catholic days. We meet with formal documents first in the thirteenth century, but these suppose the University long established.

A question having arisen in 1276, between the Regents and scholars of the University of Cambridge and the Archdeacon of Ely, with respect to jurisdiction, the same was referred to the arbitrament of Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely. He decided "that the rectors of the churches, vicars, parochial chaplains, and other ministers of the churches of Cambridge, shall be subject to the archdeacon in all things, like others in the archdeaconry; adding our declaration, that under the appellation of ministers of the churches we will to be in this case included the rector, vicar, and the clerks in the service of the church, as well as the priests who celebrate the Masses of the Blessed

\* *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, by Rev. W. D. Macray, p. 5 (1868).

† *Ib.* p. 14.

‡ Ackerman, *Oxford*, I, 257. Mass is no longer offered on the tower or within the chapel, but every May day chaplain and choristers still sing a Latin hymn at a very early hour.

§ *Munimenta*, I, 194. [Cf. Rashdall, II, pp. 403-408. It appears that in the very midst of the riot the various orders of Friars came in solemn procession chanting the Litany and bearing the Sacred Host. A scholar was killed while clinging to the Friar who carried the Blessed Sacrament.]

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Virgin, and the Masses for the souls of the faithful, provided, however, that they have been deputed by one of the parishioners in Cambridge, and are staying there principally for the sake of celebrating such Masses, although perhaps these may desire to study and to attend the schools incidentally.

“But if they have come to Cambridge chiefly for the sake of learning, although perhaps they may celebrate the aforesaid Masses at the desire of the parishioners, we will and ordain that they be entirely subject to the jurisdiction of the Chancellor.”\*

It was not until nearly a century later that several of the colleges obtained chapels of their own. The Master of the Hospital of St John received a licence in 1341; the Warden of Trinity Hall in 1352. In the same year the Master of Clare House received a similar licence, but it was only to last till the relaxation of the interdict on their parish church of St John. The Master of St Peter's and the Master of the College of the Annunciation (i.e., Gonville Hall) in 1389, but the latter grant was for three years only. In each case the rights of the parish churches were secured.† By special bulls, King's College, founded by Henry VI in 1448, was exempted from episcopal jurisdiction. As regards Masses, the scholars were subject to the Chancellor.‡

During the preceding century the power of the Chancellor had been gradually increased, for in 1345 he himself required and received a licence from the Bishop of Ely to have a low Mass said in his presence in a private oratory in his mansion.§

We find the same gratitude at Cambridge that we have already seen at Oxford. In 1347, by a foundation of Nigel Thorndon, a physician of Cambridge, a chaplain was appointed to the University. His special office was to say Mass for the benefactors, whose names he recited.||

A solemn commemoration was appointed for the soul of Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely, and founder of St Peter's College (in 1291); and a decree was made that all the Regents in their robes should repair yearly on the vigil of St Vitus and St Modestus (June 14) to St Peter's Church for the dirge. We find that even a hundred years later this decree was in full force, for in 1396 the University made a rule that no one should “incept” on that feast, in order that the exequies of the founder of Peterhouse might be celebrated with greater devotion.¶

In 1398, the Divinity Schools having been erected, together with a chapel adjoining, by the executors of Sir William de Thorpe, the University engaged that on May 6 in every year the Chancellor and Regents should meet in the said chapel, with a solemn Mass on the morrow; and on November 19 a similar service for his consort, the Lady Grace.\*\* by a statute of 1494, in gratitude for a loan given by Thomas Barowe, archdeacon of Colchester, of £240, the University of Cambridge made a statute that his name was to be read out in all the schools by the bedells each term and recommended by the priest of St Mary's in the Bidding Prayer, and Masses to be said for him, and a present of money to five poor men in honour of the five Wounds of our Lord.††

The will of King Henry VI, in which he makes provision for the foundation of Eton and of King's College, Cambridge (properly called the College

\* Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 1, 57.

† *Ib.* 1, 136. ‡ *Ib.* 1, 203.

§ *Ib.* 1, 96.

|| *Ib.* 1, 97. [One is disappointed to find that even in such a book as J. W. Clark's *Endowments of the University of Cambridge* the details of the services to be celebrated in gratitude for benefactions are judged

to have so little interest for the modern reader that they are entirely omitted. See the foundation of King Henry VII in 1504, p. 6.]

¶ Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 1, 64, 142.

\*\* *Ib.* 1, 143.

†† Dyer, *Privileges of the University of Cambridge*, 1, 155.



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of our Lady and St Nicholas), and appoints the solemn services to be performed in those chapels, concludes with these formidable words: "I not only pray and desire, but also in CHRIST require and charge, all and every of my said feoffees, etc., in virtue of the aspersion of CHRIST's Blood and of His painful Passion, that they . . . truly faithful and diligently execute my said will and every part thereof, as they will answer before the blessed and dreadful visage of our LORD JESU, in His most fearful and last day, when every man shall be most straitly examined and dealt with after his merits." \* How far this awful summons before the Judgement Seat may concern the present administrators of the Universities and colleges founded in Catholic England I do not inquire. Those who first violated their founders' wills have long ago given their account. If I may dwell for a moment on the history of my own college—St John's, Cambridge—we find one of the greatest of English bishops, John Fisher of Rochester, with untiring energy and great expense, carrying out the designs of his holy penitent, the Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby, and mother of Henry VII; yet before his death heresy with regard to the two doctrines that he had most learnedly and warmly defended—the supremacy of the Pope, and the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist—had infected many whom their founders' liberality had educated and was still supporting; and in the very Presence of the Blessed Sacrament they held a disputation against It in the College Chapel, as soon as the death of Henry VIII gave them courage to speak aloud, and in the night following the chain was cut that held the Sacred Pyx over the altar.† What act of reparation was made at that moment in heaven by the souls of Lady Margaret and Cardinal Fisher will be revealed in Eternity. We may form some judgement of what they would have felt had they been on earth from what we know of their lives. Lady Margaret had translated and published the fourth book of *The Imitation*, which treats so admirably of the Holy Eucharist. Fisher had dedicated his book *On the Truth of the Body and Blood of Christ*, which he wrote against Æcolampadius, to Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, the founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He thus writes: "Since, to satisfy the devotion that you feel and have always felt to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it has pleased you to call your College by Its name (for it is called the College of the Body of CHRIST), it has seemed fitting to me that a book which defends the truth of that Body in the Eucharist should be dedicated to your Paternity, lest you might seem to have given your College a mere empty title."‡ The College Chapel of St John's, in which Fisher celebrated Mass, was for three centuries a mere forlorn wreck of what he had made it. Its altars had been broken in pieces, the Real Presence no longer sanctified its walls. It has lately been pulled down, and a chapel architecturally far superior has been built. The names of Lady Margaret and of Fisher are still honoured in St John's College, yet the Mass is still abolished, and under the new statue of Fisher should be engraved his own words: "He who goes about to take the Holy Sacrifice of Mass from the Church plots no less a calamity than if he tried to snatch the sun from the universe."§

\* Nichol, *Royal Wills*, 291-319.

† Baker, *History of St John's*, p. 25, ed. Major.

‡ There is a college of Corpus Christi at Cambridge also. A Guild of Corpus Christi had been established at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In 1342 its members formed the design of erecting a college to provide academical instruction for persons who might become qualified to act as chap-

lains. In 1344, another Guild, called St Mary's, proposed a union which was accomplished. The members of this college directed the great procession on the feast of Corpus Christi.

§ "Quo fit ut quisquis hoc sacrificium ab ecclesiâ tollere molitur, nihilo minorem ei jacturam intentat quam si mundo solem eripere studuerit."—*Assertionum Regis Angliæ Defensio*, vi, 9.

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## CHAPTER IV. THE COURT AND THE CAMP

### *Royalty*

I HAVE no intention of making a general eulogy of our English kings and queens, much less of passing against them a sweeping censure. They were probably as good as those of other Christian countries, or as men and women are likely to be who are exposed to the many temptations that beset royalty. A few only of the kings were thoroughly corrupt and impious, most of the queens were conspicuous for piety and charity. Faith held some sway in the hearts even of the tyrannical and immoral (with the exceptions perhaps of Rufus and John), even in prosperity producing remorse and noble acts of reparation, and in periods of sickness and adversity shining with a brightness that almost makes us forget past misdeeds.

In a foregoing chapter something was said of the way in which the Holy Eucharist gave sanction and sanctity to the ancient coronation oath and ceremonial. No essential change was made in later times. An oath worthy of a Christian king and a Christian people continued to be taken and laid upon God's altar; the whole coronation service bore a religious character, and was concluded with solemn Mass and communion of the king.\* Of John alone (I think) is it recorded that he refused to receive communion. Whether from infidelity, as some asserted, or from a better motive—unwillingness to burden his soul with sacrilege—he never approached the sacraments from the days of his youth until just before his death.

Devotion in a royal household necessarily took a stately and ceremonial character, and became the subject of numerous ordinances. From their perusal very interesting glimpses may be gained of Catholic life and piety, and they have supplied the historians of royalty with many of their best pages.†

In the first place, then, Innocent IV, in 1245, granted to all royal chapels and oratories in England the privilege of exemption from ordinary jurisdiction, and of immediate subjection to the Holy See.‡ A chapel, moreover, formed a necessary part not only of every palace, but of the smallest royal lodging. Mr Wright gives a remarkable example of this. "It may give some notion," he says, "of the simplicity of the arrangement of a house, and the small number of rooms, even when required for royalty itself, when we state that in the January of 1251, King Henry III, intending to visit Hampshire and requiring a house for himself with his queen and court, gave orders to the Sheriff of Southampton to build at Freemantle a hall, a kitchen and a chamber with an upper story (*cum estagio*, sometimes called, in documents written in French, *chambre estagée*), and a chapel on the ground for the king's use; and a chamber with an upper story, with a chapel at the end of the same chamber, for the queen's use."§ As our kings made frequent progresses through the land, they carried with them "a travelling chapel," by which word *chapel* is to be understood not the building, but everything necessary for the celebration of Mass and other offices. It was

\* The kings of Scotland used to be anointed while sitting on the famous stone near the high altar at Scone, and remained seated during the whole Mass except at elevation. (*Chronicon de Melis*, II, 361, Rolls Series). [The Order of the Coronation will be found printed at length and translated in Mr L. Wickham Legg's *English Coronation Records*, or in Maskell's *Monumenta Ritualia Ecc. Ang. L.*]

† For details the reader must be referred to Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*, and Mrs Green's *Lives of the Princesses of England*. A volume called *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household*, was published by the Society of Antiquaries in 1790.

‡ *Burton Annals*, p. 275 (Rolls Series).

§ Thomas Wright, *The Homes of Other Days*, p. 152.



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the duty of the abbeyes of royal foundation to find sumpter beasts to transport these things from place to place.\*

Not only on Sundays and festivals was Mass celebrated in the royal presence, but daily and even several times daily. Hoveden relates of Richard I that in his better days he used to rise early and seek first the kingdom of God, "never leaving the church till all the offices were ended."† William the Conqueror, whatever were his faults, was looked on by those who saw the vices of his sons as a religious-minded king. He heard Mass daily, and assisted at matins, vespers and the other canonical hours.‡ A contemporary Norman chronicler speaks in the highest terms of his virtues, his prudence, magnanimity, energy, courage, fortitude, hatred of all excess, especially in drinking, and even of his spirit of penance; and the account that he has left of William's last moments bears out his claim to the last-mentioned virtue. In a fit of terrible pride and anger, he had burned the city of Mantes and harried the country round. If his death was a punishment for this act of sacrilege and cruelty, he at least accepted it as such, and expressed great regret for what he had just done, as well as for his previous barbarities in Northumberland. He had himself carried to the priory of St Gervase in the suburbs of Rouen, and there took to his bed. "Who can sufficiently relate," says the chronicler, "the floods of tears he shed to hasten the Divine clemency? He did not grieve for his own death, but for what he knew would follow it, for he foretold the misery of Normandy, and the event has shown the truth of his words. Many venerable bishops and other servants of God were there seeking to comfort him. He asked that they should celebrate for him the offices of the Visitation of the Sick and Extreme Unction, and that he should receive Holy Communion from the hands of the archbishop. And then he ended his life, and passed, as we trust, to eternal rest."§

The death of St David, king of Scotland, is more beautiful than that of William the Conqueror, because it was in perfect keeping with his holy life. I give it in the words of St Ælred, who had been brought up in his court. "When he knew that his end was approaching, he asked that the Sacrament of the Lord's Body might be given to him. While they were getting ready he stopped them, saying that he would receive the most holy mysteries before the altar. Being carried, therefore, by the hands of the clergy and the soldiers into the oratory, after Mass he asked that the venerable cross, called the black cross, might be brought to him to venerate. This is a cross a palm long of most pure gold, wonderfully made, so as to open. Within it is a portion of the true Cross (the truth of which is proved by a multitude of miracles). It has the image of our SAVIOUR of ivory adorned with gold. The most pious Queen Margaret, the king's mother, brought this cross to Scotland, and left it as a heirloom to her children. When the king had most devoutly adored this cross so revered and loved by the whole Scottish nation, and had made his confession with many tears, he then strengthened himself for his death by the reception of the heavenly mysteries. Afterwards, being carried back to his bed, when the priests came to give him the Sacrament of Holy Unction, he rose from his bed as well as he could, and, casting himself on the ground, received that holy rite with great devotion, and when the clerks recited the psalms too fast, he checked them both by sign and word, responding to every prayer. He begged that when his

\* See Letter of Henry III to the Abbot of Battle, in Shirley's *Royal Letters*, II, 213 (Rolls Series).

† *Chronica*, III, 289, 290 (Rolls Series).

‡ Matthew Paris, *Hist.*, p. 12 (ed. Wats.).

§ From the *History of the Normans*, by William Calculus, quoted by Sir T. D. Hardy in the *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores*.

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death came, it might be made known immediately, that the people might at once pray for his soul.”\*

St David had learnt his tender devotion to the Holy Eucharist from his mother, St Margaret. Of her piety several instances have been already recorded in this work. Her biographer, moreover, tells us that, “when in the morning the king was busied in affairs of state, Queen Margaret would enter the church, and there with long prayers and many sobs and tears would offer herself in sacrifice to God. For besides the hours of the Blessed Trinity, of the Holy Cross and of Holy Mary, in the space of twenty-four hours, on certain holy days, she would say two or three psalters; and before the public celebration of Mass, she had five or six Masses said for her in private.”† The same author adds that she trained her children to great reverence when assisting at the Holy Sacrifice. Royal and noble personages were accustomed, throughout the whole period which we are reviewing, to make their offering at Mass. To do this they left their places, and, advancing to the altar or to the entrance of the chancel, placed their gift in the hand of the celebrant or of the deacon. St Margaret trained her children to do this piously and with dignity, the eldest taking precedence, and the rest following according to their age. As I have not hitherto spoken of the Offertory, this will be an appropriate place to do so.

When the faithful ceased to make offerings of bread and wine, offerings of money were substituted. These were in some places laid by the people themselves on the altar; in other places, where the laity were not allowed to enter the chancel, the priest came forward himself to receive the oblations, or, if he was assisted by deacon and subdeacon, it was in their hands that the money was placed. The offerings belonged to the celebrant, the rector of the church, or the vicar, according to arrangement. The offertory was voluntary, that is, it was no debt of justice, and the omission was not sinful; though in many cases it would have been contrary to good taste and established custom to hear Mass without making an offering. Custom had regulated the amount. We find the statutes of Guilds appointing that on their solemn days each member shall offer a farthing, or perhaps a penny. In great funerals the chief mourners offered a noble (6s. 8d.), the rest of the company according to rank, or at their discretion. It is almost needless to say that if avarice was sometimes justly charged against the clergy in the mode of collecting the obligations, the laity were not always free from pride and ostentation in their manner of offering, especially as to the right of precedence. Chaucer may well have drawn his picture from life when he says of the Wife of Bath:

In all the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon  
That to the offryng beforn hire schulde goon  
And if ther dide, certeyn so wroth was sche  
That she was thanne out of alle charite.‡

These are human infirmities, from which, as St James tells us, the primitive Christians were not free, and which have survived into our nineteenth century. It was good, therefore, that such questions should be solved by custom or etiquette, as we find to have been the case at court and in noblemen's mansions, to which I will now restrict myself.

This offering of the great was regulated according to the feast, and forms a frequent item in Wardrobe or Privy-Purse Accounts. We read of special coins being struck for offertory-money. Edward II had made a *magnus dena-*

\* St Ælred, *Genealogia Regum Anglorum*, Migne, *Patrol.* tom. cxcv, col. 715.

† Bolland, *Acta SS.*, tom. xxii.

‡ Canon Simmons gives many quotations to illustrate the Offertory in the notes to the *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, pp. 231-248.



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*rius oblatorius* (a great "mass-penny," as such coins were called whatever was their value). He offered it each day, and it was redeemed for seven pence daily. In other words, the same coin was daily placed in his hand by his attendant, and was by him carried to the priest, and the treasurer paid to the dean of the chapel or head chaplain every quarter or every year for the king's oblations a sum of money, calculated at the rate of seven pence on ordinary days. On the greater feasts both king and queen each offered a noble in gold.\* Similar details are given in the Ordinances of Edward IV. The little princesses Isabella and Joanna, daughters of Edward III, when they were eight years old, had two coins made for them, engraved on one side with a crucifix, on the other with an *Agnus Dei*. With these they made their daily offering, which was calculated at the rate of one penny per day.† Mrs Green relates an incident regarding the Lady Margaret, fourth daughter of Edward I, which confers great honour on the piety of that illustrious king and his zeal for his children. She was born in 1275, and married John of Brabant in her sixteenth year. "Careful as the princess usually had been in the performance of her religious duties," says Mrs Green, "yet on the return of her bridegroom to court she became infected with somewhat of his recklessness of spirit; and their irreverence occasioned some concern and no small expense to the king. This appears by the following curious entry in the often-quoted Wardrobe Book of the year: 'Sunday, the ninth day before the translation of the Virgin (i.e., the Assumption), paid to Henry, the almoner, for feeding 300 poor men, at the king's command, because the Lady Margaret, the king's daughter, and John of Brabant, did *not* hear Mass, 36s. 7d.,' a sum equal to £27 of our money; and not satisfied that the neglect was sufficiently atoned for, by the king's request, John of Brabant gave an additional sum in alms."‡

The piety that Edward I thought to transmit to his children he had inherited from his father Henry III, of whom Walsingham gives the following account: "Every day he was wont to hear three Masses with music (*cum notâ*), and, not satisfied with that, was present at many low Masses; and when the priest elevated the LORD'S Body, he used to support the priest's hand and kiss it. It happened one day that he was conversing on such matters with St Louis, king of the French, when the latter said that it was better not always to hear Masses, but to go often to sermons. To whom the English king pleasantly replied, that he would rather see his friend frequently than hear another talking of him, however well."§

The chaplain of Henry V shows us that the bravery of that great king was equalled by his piety. In a poem that he composed, apparently before the king's death, he says that it was his custom to confess every week.

Qualibet hebdomada culpas confessio mundat.

He heard Mass with the deepest recollection and ardent prayers, putting aside all other cares, present or future.

Externas curas, præsentis sive futuras,  
Tunc non disponit, in CHRISTO spem quia ponit.

He would allow no Lollard in his household. The services of his chapel were beautifully performed, and he took care that his choir should be devout.|| We have seen what were the special devotions of this great man by the Masses that he appointed to be said after his death.¶

\* *Archæologia*, xxvi, 343.

† Mrs Green, *Lives of the Princesses*, iii, 171.

‡ *Ib.* ii, 373.

§ *Chronica S. Albani*, i, 8 (Rolls Series).

|| *Memorials of Henry V*, p. 68 (Rolls Series).

¶ See *antea*, p. 89.

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The ordinances that Edward IV drew up for the direction of John Alcock, Bishop of Rochester, and Earl Rivers to whom he had committed the education of his son, Prince Edward, may be quoted at some length, since they show the care paid to the household as well as to the prince. "First, we will that our said first-begotten son shall arise every morning at a convenient hour, according to his age, and till he be ready no man be suffered to enter into his chamber, except our right trusty and well-beloved the Earl of Rivers, his chamberlain, and his chaplains, or such other as shall be thought by the said Earl Rivers convenient for the same season, which chaplains shall say matins in his presence; and when he is ready and the matins said, forthwith to go into his chapel or closet to hear his Mass there, and in no wise in his chamber without a cause reasonable, and no man to interrupt him during his Mass time.

"Item, we will that our said son hear every holiday all the divine service of the day in his chapel or closet; and that he offer before the altar according to the custom.

"Item, we will that upon principal feasts, and usual days of predication, sermons to be said before our said son; and that all his servants be there that may conveniently be spared from their offices.

"Item, we will that our said son have his breakfast immediately after his Mass, and between that and his meat to be occupied in such virtuous learning as his age shall now suffice to receive. . . .

"Item, we will that our said son go to his evensong at a convenient hour, and that soon after done to be ere at his supper, and thereat to be served accordingly as before. . . .

"Item, we will that every day be said Mass in the hall for the officers of household, to begin at six of the clock in the morning; and at seven matins to begin in the chapel, and at nine a Mass by note with children.

"Item, we will that our said son have three chaplains, one of them to be his almoner; and that he will truly, discreetly and diligently gather and distribute our said son's alms to poor people; and that the said almoner be confessor to the household; and the other two chaplains to say Mass and divine service before our said son. . . .

"Item, we will that the sons of nobles, lords and gentlemen, being in household with our said son, arise at a convenient hour, and hear their Mass, and be virtuously brought up. . . .

"If any man come too late to matins upon the holiday, that is to say, after the third lesson, he shall sit at the water board, and have nothing unto his dinner but bread and water; and if he absent himself wilfully, he shall thus be punished whensoever he comes to dinner or supper.

"If any man be a customable swearer, or specially *by the Mass*, he falleth into perdition after his degree; if he be one of my Lady's Council, or a great officer, he loseth 12d.; a gentleman, 4d.; a yeoman, 2d., or groom, 1d.; a page,  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. . . .

"Also, that every man at time of Easter bring sufficient writing or witness where he was shriven, and when he received the holy sacrament, in pain of losing his service."\*

In connexion with the last item in these ordinances regarding the Easter Communion, I may observe that we now speak of Christians making their Easter *Duties*. Formerly it was said they "took their Rights"† (not Rites), and this word was used of Communion in general at any time. Thus in the

\* *Collection of Ordinances*, pp. 27-33.

† See several examples quoted in *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, p. 230.



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Privy-Purse expenses of Henry VII there is an entry on March 25, 1494, "To thenxmen for their rights, £1 os. d.," i.e., to the henchmen for the offertory on making their Easter Communion; and in those of Henry VIII in 1532, i.e., the year before his adulterous marriage with Anne Boleyn, there are three entries for gifts at the housel of the servants (including the court fool), but none for that of the king himself.\*

In a letter written by Dr West in 1513 from Scotland, whither he had gone as ambassador from Henry VIII, he tells the king, "On Saturday, Ester evone, the quene was houseld, and that day I came not at the cort, for so much as my servauntes were busy also to serve God."† In those days such things might be written to Henry without seeming to convey a reproach or a hint, since in his youth he was conspicuous for at least external piety. The following was the description which Sebastiano Giustiniani, the Venetian



KING HENRY V OF ENGLAND AND THE "IMAGE OF PITY."

resident in England in 1519, gave to the Council of the Pregati, of the person and manners of King Henry VIII: "He possesses a good knowledge of the French, Latin and Spanish languages, and is very devout. On the days in which he goes to the chase, he hears Mass three times; but on other days he goes as often as five times. He has every day service in the Queen's chamber at vespers and compline."‡ Even in June, 1528, mention occurs in a letter of Sir Bryan Tuke to Cardinal Wolsey of the king's hearing three Masses on a Sunday.§ It was when he had himself ceased to communicate that Henry became so zealous for others, that he sent Inquisitors to visit the monasteries, and among other articles they to inquire, "How often in the year the sisters of this house useth to be confessed and communicate," and enjoined on the monks, "every brother of this house that is a priest shall every day in his Mass pray for the most happy and most prosperous

\* These have been published by Sir Harris Nicolas, who remarks on the records of numerous lavish gifts to favourites: "The mind is impressed with horror at the reflection of how few of them escaped falling victims to his suspicion, jealousy, or revenge." (Introd. p. 31). Our Blessed Lady was treated after the same fashion. In May, 1532, Henry sent an offering

to our Lady of Walsingham; in 1538, her statue was publicly burnt by his order.

† *Illustrations of Scottish History*, p. 76 (Maitland Club, 1834).

‡ Sir Henry Ellis, *Original Letters illustrative of English History*, Second Series, III, 177.

§ *Original Letters*, First Series, I, 285.

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estate of our sovereign lord the King, and his most noble and lawful wife, Queen Anne."

It is more pleasant as well as edifying to conclude this notice of the devotion of English Kings with the description given by Bishop Fisher of Henry VII's reception of the sacraments:

"The cause of this hope was true belief that he had in God, in his Church, and in the sacraments thereof, which he received all with marvellous devotion; namely in the Sacrament of Penance, the Sacrament of the Altar, and the Sacrament of Aneling. The Sacrament of Penance, with a marvellous compassion and flow of tears, that at some time he wept and sobbed by the space of three quarters of an hour. The Sacrament of the Altar he received at Mid-Lent, and again upon Easter Day, with so great reverence that all that were present were astonyed thereat; for at his first enter into the closet where the Sacrament was, he took off his bonnet, and kneeled down upon his knees, and so crept forth devoutly till he came unto the place self where he received the Sacrament. Two days next before his departing, he was of that feebleness that he might not receive It again, nevertheless he desired to see the monstrant wherein It was contained. The good father, his confessor, in goodly manner as was convenient, brought It unto him; he with such a reverence, with so many knockings and beatings of his breast, with so quick and lively a countenance, with so desirous a heart, made his humble obeisance thereunto; with so great humbleness and devotion kissed, not the self place where the Blessed Body of our LORD was contained, but the lowest part of the foot of the monstrant, that all that stood about him scarcely might contain them from tears and weeping. The Sacrament of Aneling, when he well perceived that he began utterly to fail, he desirously asked therefor, and heartily prayed that it might be administered unto him; wherein he made ready and offered every part of his body by order, and as he might for weakness turned himself at every time, and answered in the suffrages thereof. That same day of his departing, he heard Mass of the glorious Virgin, the mother of CHRIST, to whom always in his life he had singular and special devotion. The image of the crucifix many a time that day full devoutly he did behold with great reverence, lifting up his head as he might, holding up his hands before it, and often embracing it in his arms, and with great devotion kissing it, and beating oft his breast. Who may think that in this manner was not perfect faith? Who may suppose that by this manner of dealing he faithfully believed not that the ear of Almighty God was open unto him, and ready to hear him cry for mercy; and assistant unto these same sacraments which he so devoutly received?"\*

The same holy preacher, not many months after the death of Henry VII, pronounced the funeral oration of the King's mother, the Lady Margaret. Though this sketch of a noble and saintly widow has been often quoted and is well known, yet I cannot omit it in a History of the Holy Eucharist:

"Every day at her uprising, which commonly was not long after five of the clock, she began certain devotions, and so after them with one of her gentlewomen the Matins of our Lady, which kept her to then she came into her closet, where then with her chaplain she said also Matins of the day; and after that, daily heard four or five Masses upon her knees, so continuing in her prayers and devotions unto the hour of dinner, which of the eating day was ten of the clock, and upon the fasting day eleven. After dinner full truly she would go her stations to three altars daily; daily her dirges and commendations she would say

\* This sermon has been published by Baker, by Hymsers, and in the works of Fisher, by the E. E. Text Society.



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and her evensongs before supper, both of the day and of our Lady, beside many other prayers and Psalters of David throughout the year; and at night before she went to bed she failed not to resort to her chapel, and there a large quarter of an hour to occupy her devotions.\* . . . Her marvellous weeping they can bear witness of, which here before have heard her confession, which be divers and many and at many seasons in the years, lightly every third day; can also record the same those that were present at any time when she was houseled, which was full nigh a dozen times every year, what floods of tears there issued from her eyes. She might well say, *Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei*. . . .

"For the second part now, that this noble princess had full faith in JESU CHRIST, . . . she that openly did witness this same thing at the hour of her death, which saying divers here present can record; how heartily she answered when the Holy Sacrament containing the Blessed JESU in It was holden before her, and the question made until her, whether she believed that there was verily the Son of GOD that suffered His blessed Passion for her and for all mankind upon the Cross. Many here can bear record, how with all her heart and soul she made answer thereunto, and confessed assuredly that in that sacrament was contained CHRIST JESU, the Son of GOD, that died for wretched sinners upon the Cross, in whom wholly she put her trust and confidence. . . . And so soon after that she was aneled, she departed, and yielded up her spirit into the hands of our LORD."

Fisher speaks of Lady Margaret's monthly communions as of something very unusual. From the Privy-Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York in 1502, it appears that she went three times to communion during that year, viz., on the feasts of Easter, All Saints and Christmas.† Probably few queens or great ladies received communion more frequently, though of Catherine of Aragon it is related that she confessed at least weekly, and received the Eucharist every Sunday.‡ I will conclude my account of royalty with Sander's eulogy of this holy queen:

"There was some difference in age between Henry and Catharine, and a still greater difference in their lives. She was older than her husband in years, at the utmost five years, but more than a thousand years in character. Catharine used to rise at midnight in order to be present at matins sung by religious. At five o'clock she dressed herself, but as quickly as she could, saying that the only time wasted was the time spent in dressing. She was a member of the third Order of St Francis, and wore the habit thereof under her royal robes. She fasted every Friday and Saturday, and on bread and water on the eves of our Lady's feasts. She went to confession every Wednesday and Friday, and on Sunday received communion. She said the office of our Lady daily, and was present every morning in church for six hours together during the sacred offices. After dinner, and in the midst of her maids of honour, she read the lives of saints for two hours. That done, she went to church, and generally remained there till it was time for supper, which was with her a very scanty meal. She always prayed on her knees without a cushion or anything else between them and the pavement. Can anyone be astonished that so saintly a woman was to be tried in a greater fire of tribulation, so that the fragrance of her goodness might be the more scattered over the Christian world?"§

\*The order of the day of the Princess Cecily, mother of Edward IV, was very similar during her widowhood. See *Collection of Ordinances*, p. 37.

†Miss Strickland describes the ceremonial pomp with which this queen was houseled before "taking to

her chamber" for the birth of her eldest daughter in 1489 (*Lives of the Queens*, iv, 47).

‡*Ib.* iv, 117.

§Nicolas Sander, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, translated by David Lewis, p. 7.

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From the documents and histories here given it will have been apparent to every thoughtful reader that, in proportion as kings and queens were virtuous, great and noble, were they filled with devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Neglect of that sacrament went along with immorality and impiety. So that here again we may see a confirmation of the Catholic Faith in that Divine Mystery. And now, if we descend in the social scale to the nobility and knighthood, the chivalry and soldiery of the nation, we shall meet with similar facts and be brought to the same conclusion.

## *The Nobility*

IN 1341, the Provincial Council of Canterbury under Archbishop John Stratford decreed:

“That at all times it had been irregular to celebrate the Holy Mysteries in unconsecrated places without necessity, that this tradition and the Church’s canons were now neglected by many priests regular and secular, thus withdrawing people from their parish churches and instructions: wherefore anyone in future celebrating in oratories, chapels and houses of this kind, without the permission of the bishop, will incur suspension from Mass for a month *ipso facto*, unless the place or its master has an apostolic privilege, in which case it must be shown to the bishop within two months. This does not extend to the oratories and chapels of kings. Bishops are not easily to grant privileges in this matter.”\*

It will be seen from this decree how eagerly the nobility were copying the example of royalty in having their own chapels and chaplains. Some of the great lords, indeed, fell little short of kings in the splendour of their household and the number of ecclesiastics who formed part of it. From the Northumberland Household Book we find that in 1512 there were no less than eleven priests attached to the service of that great family—a Doctor or Bachelor of Divinity as dean of the chapel, a sub-dean to “order the choir,” a secretary, an almoner, a surveyor of lands, and a riding chaplain to my lord, a priest for a chaplain for my lord’s eldest son, one for the Lady Mass, one to read the Gospel daily in the chapel, one as clerk to the closet, and lastly, one as master of grammar.† This was the exceptional retinue of one of the great ducal families; but few of any distinction had less than two or three chaplains, and private chapels must have been extremely numerous throughout the country. In 1238 William, Earl Warren, had caused his chaplain to say Mass in his hall. His bishop was Robert Grosseteste, a man without any human respect. He at once cited both the earl and his chaplain to answer for this before his court. The earl complained of this citation, but the bishop justified and renewed it: “Your hall is not a place dedicated to God, but a common dwelling-place, a place for eating and drinking, where men talk frivolously, scurrilously, and perhaps obscenely, where dogs run about and sleep and leave filth. Must not every Christian see how unbecoming it is in such a place to consecrate the Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Son of the living God, the Body taken from the most pure Virgin, which suffered on the Cross, was glorified in the Resurrection, and is raised above the heavens? Therefore, both Old and New Testaments and the Canons prescribe that the Mass be not celebrated except in consecrated places, unless in case of very great necessity (*summa necessitas*).”‡ But though the bishops could and did fight against abuses like the above, they

\* Wilkins, t. II, p. 677. When this decree was renewed next year in a provincial council held in London, it was added that it was not intended to derogate from the rights of prelates, rectors, canons

and religious, to continue to celebrate in their oratories already constructed (*Ib.* p. 696).

† *The Northumberland Household Book*, edited by Bishop Percy, p. 370. ‡ Ep. 66 (Rolls Series).



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were obliged to yield to custom and authorize private chapels, where the only necessity was the respectability of the family that could not forego a privilege enjoyed by others of like condition.\*

In the fifteenth century grants of portable altars from the popes became not unfrequent.† It was, however, added in the grants that "the altar was to be kept with reverence and honour," and Mass to be said only "in fit and decent places."‡ No wonder with such facilities as these an old poet says:

Lords that hath priests at will  
Me thinketh they trespass full ill,  
That any day eat, ere they hear Mass,  
But if it be through harder distress.§

And indeed not only lords who had private chapels, but men and women of all conditions above the labouring classes, were accustomed to hear daily Mass, and that before breakfast, or dinner as it was then called. Early English literature is full of allusions to this custom. Not only the lord before he goes hunting, but the merchant before opening his shop, must hear Mass. Even for travellers starting at daybreak Mass was said in chapels on the bridge, as in London. In Morecambe Bay is an island still called Chapel Island, because on it once stood a chapel where travellers across the sands at low water stopped to hear Mass. These things, however, are so well known to all who have any acquaintance with the Middle Ages, that a kind of objection against Catholic piety has been founded on the fact of its being so universal.

## Chivalry

THE Church has ever sought to consecrate to GOD and to ennoble whatever in human institutions was innocent, good and capable of such consecration. It need not be told here how she laboured to sanctify the profession of arms, and to make the knight not only brave, but also pure and just, compassionate and pious.|| As usual, one of her mightiest instruments in this work was the Holy Eucharist. The writer who calls himself Ingulph may be trusted in a matter of so public a nature as the consecration of a knight, even though the history of Hereward the Saxon, in which it occurs, may in some of its details be of doubtful authenticity.

"It was the custom," he says, "of the English, that he who was about to be lawfully consecrated a knight, should, the evening before the day of his consecration, with contrition and compunction, make confession of all his sins before some bishop, abbot, monk or priest, and should, after being absolved, pass the night in a church, giving himself up to prayer, devotion, and mortification. On the following day he was to hear Mass, and to make offering of a sword upon the altar, and, after the gospel, the priest was to bless the sword, and with his blessing to lay it upon the neck of the knight; on which, after having communicated at the same Mass in the sacred mysteries of CHRIST, he became a lawful knight. The Normans held in abomina-

\* From Bishop Edyndon's *Register*, vol. II, it appears that he granted licences for private oratories in Hampshire as follows: In 1346, 16 licences; in 1347, 12; in 1348, 10; in 1349, 4; and from that year to 1365, 21. I owe this and other extracts from the *Winchester Registers* to the kindness of Mr Baigent, who has transcribed the whole. According to Lyndwood, the term *nobiles*, to whom such licence could be granted, included knights and esquires holding dignified office (*Prov.* p. 234).

† Pope Martin V granted one to the merchants of

the Staple, because of their frequent journeys. (Weever, *Monum.*, p. 340.) Julius II confirmed a similar grant to the Guild of St Botolph's at Boston. (*Arch. Journal*, IV, 248.)

‡ See grant to Sir John Bardolf, by Clement VI, in Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*, IV, 210; and by Innocent VIII to Sir Robert Arbutnot, in the *Spalding Club Miscellany*, II, 104.

§ Robert de Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, l. 7311, sq.

|| See *The Broadstone of Honour, or Philosophical History of Chivalry*, by Kenelm Digby.

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tion this mode of consecrating a knight, and did not consider such a person to be a lawful knight, but a mere tardy trooper, and a degenerate plebeian. And not only in this custom, but in many others as well, did the Normans effect a change.”\*

Whatever this writer may mean by these reflections, the Normans certainly had no contempt for the religious ceremonies used in making a knight, for it is well known that they survived for centuries. It is seldom, however, that the modern writers who allude to them tell us how prominent a part was always given to the celebration of Mass and holy communion. Herbert has printed a formula for making a Knight of the Bath. It is imperfect, but contains the following rubrics for the Mass, which was at a very early hour:

“When the spring of the day appeareth the squire shall confess him, and then hear matins and Mass, and after Mass be houseled if he will. But after that he be entered into the chapel, he shall (have) a taper of wax brenning in the chapel before him. And when the Mass is begun, one of his chamberlains shall hold the taper before the squire till the gospel be begun, and then he shall betake it to the squire to hold during the gospel time. . . . And at sacring of the Mass one of the chamberlains shall take the squire’s hood off his head, and after the sacring put it on again till the priest comes to *In principio*. And at the beginning thereof one of the chamberlains shall put off the squire’s hood again, and give him the taper in his hand to stand up and hold, and then must a penny be stacked on the said taper above fast by the light. And when the priest cometh to *Et Verbum caro factum est*, the squire shall kneel and offer the taper with the penny, that is to say, the taper to the worship of God, and the penny at worship of him that shall make him knight.”†

If the sanctity and mystic signification of the marriage contract does not always insure a holy union, nor the Sacrament of Holy Orders make a saint of every priest, it need hardly be said that this solemn initiation did not always insure the virtues of a Christian knight. And owing to the preponderance of the records of what is evil over those of what is good in human affairs, it is much more easy to draw up a list of acts of barbarity and sacrilege than of acts of knightly piety towards the Blessed Sacrament. In the wars between the English and the Scotch there occur on both sides acts of impiety towards churches and monasteries; there are found also many redeeming examples of faith and justice. If, for instance, the Scotch soldiers offered violence to a priest while saying Mass at Hexham, Wallace punished them with death. If Bruce stabbed Sir John Comyn before the high altar of the Grey Friars Church at Dumfries, he afterwards consented to do public penance for his crime at the shrine of St Mungo in Glasgow.‡

Besides such recorded acts of reparation on the part of the guilty, a very lively belief prevailed that, in lack of other avengers, God Himself interfered to punish outrages against the Blessed Sacrament. Geoffrey Mandeville, in the time of Stephen, had seized on the Abbey of Ramsey, and ejected the monks. Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, writes: “While that church was being held as a castle, blood bubbled out of the walls of the church and the adjacent cloisters, as I myself saw with mine own eyes, and many others, and thus manifested the Divine indignation, and foreshadowed the fearful end of these miscreants. For since the impious affirmed that God was asleep, He showed Himself awake by this sign and the fulfilment of it.”§

\* Ingulph’s *Chronicle*, translated by Riley, p. 141.

quities, II, 28.

† Hailes, I, 355.

‡ Dibdin’s *Herbert and Ames, Typographical Anti-*

§ Book VIII, 22 (Rolls Series).



# THE COURT AND THE CAMP

In 1379, John Arundel, with a body of armed men, set sail from Plymouth for Brittany, when a sudden storm wrecked the ships on the shores of Ireland, Wales and Cornwall, and more than a thousand persons perished. This was considered a chastisement; for "while waiting at Plymouth they had oppressed and robbed the people, insulted the women, even carried off nuns and the young ladies who, as was customary, were being educated in the convent; and lastly, had carried off a chalice from a church. The priest had followed them to their ships, and publicly and solemnly excommunicated them, while they laughed and mocked at him. But they soon paid the penalty, being swallowed up in the salt waves, and eaten by the monsters of the deep."\*

There are, however, histories of a very different kind which show that faith and piety were not always banished from the camp. The Normans before the Battle of Hastings are said to have spent the night in prayer and confession, and their victory was attributed to their piety rather than their bravery; for the English, it is said, trusted in themselves and prepared for battle by songs and drinking.† The chronicler of Meaux says that before the Battle of Bannockburn "the English in their pride trusted in their strength and numbers, while the Scotch, contrite, and after confession and viaticum, implored the help of God."‡ The Scotch historians enter into more detail: "Maurice, Abbot of Inchaffray, celebrated Mass on a hill in sight of the Scottish army, and then passed along the front of the line barefooted, and lifting up a crucifix before their eyes adjured the troops in burning words to fight for their rights and liberty. The whole army knelt down, and the priests administered the Holy Eucharist to them. 'They yield,' cried the English king, mistaking the pious action; 'see, they ask mercy.' 'Sire,' said Ingelram de Umfraville, 'they do, but it is not yours. On yonder field they will conquer or die.'"\$

In the examples just related neglect of religion and defeat were on the side of the English. Before the battle of Agincourt the contrary was the case. It was the French who trusted in themselves, the English who prayed, did penance, and made at least a spiritual or symbolic communion.¶ Again, it was under the protection of the famous banner of St Cuthbert—his "corporax cloth"—that the English gained the battle of Neville's Cross, near Durham, in 1346, against David Bruce.¶ Still more famous was their devotion to the Holy Eucharist at the battle of the Standard at Northallerton in 1138. The Standard consisted of the sacred banners of St Cuthbert of Durham, St Peter of York, St John of Beverley, and St Wilfrid of Ripon, hung from a pole fixed on a cart in the midst of the army. Some authors state that the Holy Eucharist Itself hung in a pyx from this pole; \*\* and if this seems a strange and even sacrilegious use to give to the Sacrament of Peace, it may be said that this was a holy war, and that the indignation of all faithful men had been aroused by the frightful sacrileges of the men of Galloway. Henry of Huntingdon, a contemporary, says, they beheaded priests at the very altar, and then, cutting off the heads of the great crucifixes on the rood-beams, they put the

\* *Life of Richard II*, by a contemporary monk of Evesham, Hearn's ed., p. 16.

† William of Malmesbury.

‡ *Chronicon de Melsa*, II, 331. The chronicler of Woburn gives the same account.

§ *Annals of the Church of Scotland*, by Rev. Mackenzie Walcott, p. 41. He refers to *Annals of Scotland*, II, 47; Boece, XIV, 11; Hailes, II, 60; Leslie, 144. The Abbot of Inchaffray, afterwards Bishop of Dunblane in 1319. He was confessor to Robert Bruce. Inchaffray means the Island of Masses. It was an

abbey of Austin Canons, founded early in the thirteenth century, on a rising ground or island near Perth.

¶ See p. 40.

¶ On this banner see *Rites of Durham*, p. 79 (Surtees Society). [In the new edition, edited by Canon Fowler, 1903, pp. 23-25, and p. 215. Cf. *Archæologia Æliana*, N.S. I, p. 271.]

\*\* "Placing above the banners the Body of the Lord, that He might be their standard-bearer and leader of the battle" (Richard of Hexham).

# THE EUCHARIST IN POPULAR LIFE

priest's head on the trunk of the crucifix, and the head of the crucifix on the trunk of the priest.\* If this seems a story too horrible to be believed, it is perfectly borne out by northern writers, such as Reginald of Durham, and by St Ælred, who, if not an eyewitness, was intimately acquainted with the leaders of both the Scotch and English armies.

In the speech which St Ælred puts into the mouth of Walter of Espec before the battle, it is said that the Scotch barbarians from Galloway, besides their other enormous brutalities and cruelties, had trodden the Blessed Sacrament under their feet in the churches they had ravaged.† Walter also encourages his followers to the battle by the thought that they had just received the Flesh and Blood of CHRIST. Again, in the speech of Robert de Brus to King David, it is mentioned that this holy king had been horrified at the wickedness of these men of Galloway, had wept, beaten his breast, and protested that it was against his orders. Before the fight begins, Ralph, Bishop of the Orcades, sent by Archbishop Turstan, commands the English to fight for the pardon of their sins, and gives them a general absolution and his blessing.‡

The facts gathered together in this chapter are too miscellaneous and too few, scattered as they are over several centuries, to justify any conclusion for or against the general piety or morality of the higher and military classes. To those who have faith they will give occasion to glorify the condescension and longanimity of God. Even those who hesitate to accept the Mystery of Faith will do well to pause thoughtfully on one aspect of the facts here related, which needs no faith to verify it. In every class of life, from the king to the common soldier, in proportion as men were pure, and generous, and noble in life and death, was their faith lively, and their devotion tender, and their adoration profound towards the Holy Eucharist; while in proportion as their faith, and devotion, and adoration were earnest, were their lives elevated, and their deaths magnanimous.

## CHAPTER V. OBSERVANCE OF FESTIVALS

**R**OBERT DE BRUNNE thus states his views regarding the ecclesiastical year and its observances:

For the Pope may, through his power—Turn the holy days in the year,—How as he will, at his own will;—But the Sunday shall stand still.—The holy days that in harvest are—In Yole he may set them there;—And of the Yole every feast—May be set in harvest.—But he may through no reason—The Sunday put up nor down.—Therefore the Sunday specially—Is highest to hallow and most worthy,—And that day thou owest and shall—For to hear thy service all,—matins, Mass hear, to read or sing—Every deal to the ending.—Wait the time and be not last—To come when holy water is cast,—Come first to matins if that thou may—For it is God's own day.§

It matters not to inquire how far Robert was right in his estimate of the extent and limitation of the Pope's authority. There is an old maxim, *Summum jus, summa injuria*. And though the Pope may "have a giant's power," he has not been wont "to use it as a giant," unless in cases of extreme necessity. Certainly hitherto the sovereign pontiffs have no more thought of placing Christmas at midsummer, or Whitsuntide in winter, than they have thought of abolishing the Sunday, or, like the revolutionists of France, changing the week from seven days to ten.

\* Book VIII, 6. (Rolls Series).

† They did this in St Godric's chapel. See p. 236.

‡ Migne, *Patrol.* tom. cxcv.

§ *Handlyng Synne*, l. 809, sq.



# OBSERVANCE OF FESTIVALS

The controversies regarding Easter in the third century are sufficient to prove that the observance of fasts and feasts is of apostolic origin. But while the greater commemorations of the year remain the same throughout all ages, and through the whole extent of Christendom, almost each century has witnessed some addition, and each country contributed some modification, to the calendar. If the continued contemplation of ancient mysteries is ever bringing forth new forms of devotion, on the other hand new heresies or impieties demand new protests, new events in the Church's history require grateful commemoration, and new saints in every age and country arise as claimants for the Church's honours. This growth has to be checked or regulated by authority, by which also the problem has to be solved as to how far the celebrations of the church should encroach on social and civil life, and how, while the fervent are restrained from excess, the slothful should be urged on, and the disorderly chastised.

A full history both of popular devotion and of the action of authority in the celebration of fasts and feasts, even in one country, would require a volume. It will be enough, however, for my purpose to give a general indication of the number and kind of holidays which were, as we say, of obligation for the people; in other words, of the days on which the people were bound to make holiday and to be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We shall thus understand what mysteries or events were then specially commemorated in England.

The synod of Exeter, held in the year 1287, gives a list of the days of precept at that time. Instead of following this list month by month, it will be more convenient to classify the commemorations, completing our information from some other sources.\*

Besides the Sundays throughout the year (which included Trinity Sunday, Easter and Pentecost), the great festivals of our LORD, Christmas and the Circumcision, Epiphany and the Ascension, were of strict obligation. In the fourteenth century Corpus CHRISTI was added to the number. The whole octave of Christmas was a continued holiday, as were also the three days which followed Easter, and the three days after Pentecost. Among days of precept were the two feasts of the Holy Cross, that on which is commemorated its finding by St Helen (May 3), and thence popularly called in England St Helen's Day, and that of its recovery or exaltation by the Emperor Heraclius (September 14). At a considerably later period we find two other feasts of our LORD added to some calendars—that of the Transfiguration† on August 6, and that of the Name of JESUS on the 7th. But at no time were these days of precept throughout England.

Both Corpus CHRISTI and Holy Week will demand separate treatment. In the latter, Good Friday, though a fast, was a day of strict precept in regard to assistance at the divine offices in church, as we learn from Archbishop Islip.

In addition to the four festivals of our Lady celebrated by the Anglo-Saxon church—viz., the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity, in February, March, August and September—the feast of our Lady's Conception was made of obligation by a Council of the Province of Canterbury in 1328. It is placed in the list of the Synod of Exeter in 1287. In the Scotch Church, as we learn from the Arbuthnot Missal, written in 1491, the Visitation of our Lady (July 2) was to be kept as a holiday by clergy and laity.

\* Wilkins, II, 145, 175; III, 252. Also notes and calendars prefixed to various missals.

† An ancient feast, however, in some churches.

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It appears also as a principal feast in some English calendars of the fifteenth century.\* Two other feasts, the Presentation (November 21) and our Lady of the Snow (August 5), though found in some calendars, had not attained a general celebration before the Reformation, and were nowhere obligatory on the laity.

The Synod of Exeter also enumerates the various feasts of the twelve Apostles as well as of St Barnabas, St Mark and St Luke, the two feasts of St John Baptist, those of St Michael, St Martin, St Nicholas, St Gregory and of All Saints. St Mary Magdalen and St Catherine the virgin martyr were the only women besides our Blessed Lady whose feasts the people were bound to celebrate, though in A.D. 1400 St Anne and St Winifred were added. The feasts of St Augustine, the Apostle of England, and of St George, the special patron, are not found in all MSS of the Exeter list. Pope Innocent VI in 1354 ordered the feast of St Augustine to be thus publicly kept as a holiday. The devotion to St George did not begin with the crusades. His feast is in Anglo-Saxon calendars, and his name was sometimes even mentioned in the Canon of the Mass.

Besides the feasts just named the following were of precept in the thirteenth century, the Conversion of St Paul, the Chair of St Peter at Antioch (February 22), St John before the Latin Gate and St Peter's Chains. In 1400 all these were omitted from among days of obligation together with those of St Barnabas, St Gregory, St Martin and the beheading of St John Baptist, while in compensation the feast of St Chad and the commemoration of All Souls (as well as St Anne and St Winifred) were added.

St Thomas of Canterbury alone of English saints was thus publicly honoured by the whole country (before St Chad's feast was ordered to be kept as of obligation).† St Thomas, however, was not only honoured on his festival in the octave of Christmas, but also on the day of his translation (July 7), and was commemorated daily in the suffrages.

Thus, including the Sundays, rather more than a hundred days in the year were kept as public holidays, by cessation from servile work and assistance at the divine offices.

In addition to these, each parish kept the feast of the patron of the place and that of the dedication of the Church, and each diocese the feast or perhaps feasts of the patron or patrons of the cathedral.

Popular devotion too would often outrun precept, and the feasts of English saints were probably observed throughout the whole country with more enthusiasm than would be roused by saints of higher ecclesiastical rank, but less intimately known.

How, it may be asked, were the numerous festivals observed? With what piety? With what benefit to men's souls? With what benefit to the country? If we consider what these questions involve, what an immense field of human action they comprise, what a long period of history they embrace, it will be evident that no one, however versed in antiquarian studies, could without utter folly attempt to give any general answers. Were such an inquiry instituted about our own times, were it even restricted to one diocese, and were a score of experienced and thoughtful priests and laymen called on to give an account of the observance of Sundays and festivals within the last twenty years, how varied and even contradictory would be their statements!

\* In the province of York the Visitation was added to the calendar by Convocation as late as 1526, and then assigned to April 2.

† St Thomas of Hereford has two feasts of obliga-

tion in the list of the Provincial Council of Canterbury under Archbishop Simon Islip in 1359; but I do not find them mentioned by Archbishop Arundel in 1400.



# OBSERVANCE OF FESTIVALS

Not only does town differ from country, and class from class; but place also differs from place, because of local influences, the varying zeal of the clergy, the good or bad example of the more conspicuous among the laity, the effect of past traditions, the thinness of the population, the extent of the district, the occupations or wealth of the inhabitants. If then we extend the inquiry to the whole of Great Britain and to five hundred years of time, the solution of the questions proposed becomes so complicated as to baffle any but Him "to whom His Father has given all judgement." Generation after generation passes before Him. From the tabernacle He invites all, on the altar He offers Himself for all, at the foot of the altar He gives Himself to all and to each who is willing to receive Him. He will know how He has been treated by each country, by each parish, by each soul that He has created and redeemed. He alone can judge. One thing only we know—that the Father seeketh those who will adore Him in spirit and in truth, and that the Son has given men the means of offering to the Father that sacrifice of adoration which He will accept.

These remarks will perhaps not seem uncalled for to such as will reflect on the extreme difficulty we all feel in abstaining from hasty conclusions and unfair judgements, when confronted by some striking fact in former times. Our vision of distant times is so indistinct that one such fact when placed before us seems to occupy the whole field. We can, indeed, easily distinguish between country and country, but not so between century and century. We require frequently to recall the elementary truths that "the ancients did not all live at the same time," that "the Middle Ages" is merely a convenient term including in itself the lives of many generations of Christians.

Let then the documents I am about to quote have their due weight, but let them not be exaggerated into sweeping condemnations of the whole of medieval England.

John Peckham, a Franciscan friar, became Archbishop of Canterbury. He showed on the throne of St Augustine the same zeal and apostolic boldness of language which had distinguished him as a missionary. No one ever used more freedom in condemning the evils of his day, and he speaks in very strong terms of the inobservance of Sundays and festivals in 1291.\*

About seventy years later Archbishop Islip called the attention of his suffragans to the same subject. He complains that "what had been established for the honour of God's elect has been turned into blasphemy and abomination, since on feast days especially meetings, marketings and other prohibited practices are carried on. What had been instituted for the strengthening of devotion is now maintained for the increase of dissoluteness. Taverns are more frequented than churches, feasting and drunkenness abound more than prayer and tears, and people give themselves up to lasciviousness and quarrelling more than to the repose of contemplation."†

The archbishop orders therefore that stringent measures of reformation be adopted. All who have come to the years of discretion may be compelled, if necessary, by canonical censures, to attend their parish churches on the Sundays. The Sunday begins from Saturday evening vespers, and so is it with all feasts which have a vigil.

The very words used by Simon Islip were repeated in 1401 by Thomas Arundel in a decree directed against the Sunday fairs kept up at Harrow-on-the-Hill.‡ Before quoting the language of authority on the subject, it may

\* Wilkins, II, 175.

1362. Also, though not in the same terms, in Wilkins, III, 43, date 1359.

† From the MS. register of William of Edyndon, Bishop of Winchester, fol. 119, vol. 1, date Nov. 2,

‡ Wilkins, III, 266.

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be well to listen to the complaints and exhortations of a preacher. The Dominican John Bromyard, writing in the fourteenth century, after first showing how festivals should be kept, continues thus: "But now-a-days the very contrary is done, for there are few who give up bodily labour. Either they gather the harvest or store it, or lead carts or lend them to others, when they ought to serve God and not their neighbours. And if perhaps a few cease from labour, there are very few who do not either go themselves or send their servants with loaded mules to fairs and markets. There is scarce a great day in the year on which a fair is not held in some place, and in many places there is a market on every Sunday throughout the year, to which there is a much greater concourse than if it were held on any other day, so that as you go on the roads you meet many a packhorse on the Sunday. Many think that they keep the feast well if they do not labour, and also that it is clear gain if they can make their sales and purchases when they are not occupied in labour. And thus, from such a concourse, many do not hear Mass or obey any other precept of God; and the people of the town where the market is held are so busy that they scarcely hear a Low Mass.

"But suppose they neither work nor go to markets, yet how little do they do for their souls. They get up late, and come late to church, and wish to be so little there, that they will urge the priest to be quick because they have a friend coming to dinner. If there should be a sermon about their salvation, they excuse themselves from hearing it, by saying that it is getting too late for them to remain, or they are vexed and wearied if compelled to stay. Even the short time that they cannot help remaining in the church they spend in unnecessary talk, forgetting that the house of God is the house of prayer. Then they go away to dinner or to the tavern, and there they are in no hurry, for some will spend there the whole of the rest of the day and even till late at night, like the Amalecites, 'eating and drinking and as it were keeping a festival day'" (1 Kings xxv, 16).\*

Robert de Brunne makes a similar complaint of the unwillingness of some slothful or sensual men to listen to sermons:

And if a frere come for to preach,  
Of a dinner were better speech:  
Then saith he: "God shall save all,  
Do well, well shalt thou have."  
Certes, that is not enow  
For he doth nothing to prow,  
But if he would listen the frere  
To do well then might he lere.†

Such complaints as these, or satirical descriptions, belong to all times and countries, but the abuses connected with the fairs kept on Sundays and holidays are peculiar to country districts, and admit of easy explanation if not of excuse.

Archbishop Arundel, while blaming and abolishing the market or fair carried on every Sunday in the churchyard at Harrow, and forbidding any shops or tents to be erected there in future under pain of excommunication, makes an exception for the harvest time. Then, as the people are engaged during the week in agriculture which they cannot leave without great loss to go to the town to make their purchases, he allows them to do this on Sunday, outside the churchyard, provided they have heard Mass, though not necessarily the High Mass.‡

\* *Summa Prædicatorum*, part 1, p. 292.

† *Handlyng Synne*.

‡ Wilkins, III, 266.



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In days when there were few fixed stores or shops except in the great towns, and when most of the necessities or conveniences of life were purchased from itinerant merchants, every effort would be made by these to dispose of their goods wherever there was a concourse of people, and so save themselves the trouble and expense of travelling from house to house. They therefore tried to convert the Sunday gathering for Mass into a weekly fair. This, of course, suited the convenience of the people too well to admit of easy remedy, and the evil grew until it called for the interference of the State. The following is the preamble of a statute passed in the twenty-seventh year of Henry VI (A.D. 1448):—"Considering the abominable injuries and offences done to Almighty God and to His saints, always aiders and singular assisters in our necessities, because of the fairs and markets upon their high and principal feasts, as in the Feast of the Ascension of our LORD, in the day of Corpus CHRISTI, in the day of Whitsunday, in Trinity Sunday, with other Sundays, as also in the high feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, accustomed and miserably holden and used in the realm of England; in which principal and festival days, for great earthly covetize, the people is more willingly vexed, and in bodily labour foiled, than in other ferial days; as in fastening and making their booths and stalls, bearing and carrying, lifting and placing their wares outward and homeward, as though they did nothing remember the horrible defilement of their souls in buying and selling, with many deceitful lies and false perjury, with drunkenness and strifes, and so especially withdrawing themselves and their servants from divine service: Therefore, the king, by the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons of this realm, decrees that fairs be no longer held on Sundays and holidays," etc.

We have now seen the dark side of English life as described by a satirist and preacher, bishop and parliament. Soft and apologetic language was unknown in the Middle Ages. In describing abuses men used the strongest terms they could find. In their panegyrics they make reserves, but rarely in their censures. Moreover, the passages quoted have been so many indictments against criminals; no balance of good and evil has been attempted, no praise whatever bestowed upon the virtuous and devout. Yet who does not know that while a church is crowded with pious worshippers, and hundreds are feeding on the Bread of Life, a handful of brawlers in a public-house may cause scandal and bring disgrace upon a parish? Is it to be wondered at, that when the whole of England was at least nominally Catholic, and the pastoral care of the bishops included all and gave account of all, many should have been found of whom a most unsatisfactory account had to be given? At the present day, when church accommodation is not provided for half the population, and the descendants of Christians, now heathen and unbaptized, and ignorant of all religion, are wandering on every side like sheep without a shepherd, it little behoves us, whether we are Catholic or Protestant, to pass censure on medieval England, covered as it was with churches far beyond the needs of the whole people.

If there were many who neglected or profaned the Church's holidays, they were certainly few compared with those who kept them, who entered into their spirit and profited by their observance. It is impossible, of course, to bring documents in proof of this assertion. Bishops do not issue letters in order to praise the good, as they do to blame and coerce the wicked. Councils do not meet to sing *Te Deums* for the flourishing state of religion, but to deplore and correct abuses. Sermons generally—medieval sermons most certainly—are

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laudatory of past ages and the deeds of the saints, but only by way of contrast with the present degeneracy. The evidences of piety are so scattered, so incidental, so minute, that however convincing they may be to one long conversant with medieval documents, and all the more convincing because of their incidental nature, they yet cannot be produced, so as to affect in a like manner those to whom such studies are unfamiliar. To give a few small details would be useless, to classify and array a great multitude would be tedious.

It may, however, be said, without exaggeration, that almost all the acts of piety and devotion contained in these volumes are connected directly or indirectly with the festivals of the Church, since the cycle of fast and feast of the Christian year was the most active, most continuous, and most universal means of enlightening the minds and moving the hearts of men. How few were the books possessed by any but monks! Two or three, in addition to those belonging to his church, formed the treasure of a parish priest. Without the festivals of the Church the life of the bulk of the nation would not merely have been of the world worldly and sensual, but it would have been shut up in the present. A few ballads and traditional tales would alone have told them of things remote or past. The absence of books was made up for by the constantly recurring, though ever varying, feasts. The wonderful drama of God's dealings with men in former ages was ever being acted before the nation. Not only by sermons did the Church teach. The churches in which the people assembled were teachers. The history of Malmesbury, Abingdon, Westminster, Peterborough, went back into far distant times, beyond the Norman, and even, as in the case of Glastonbury, beyond the Saxon conquest. The plainest parish church, with its Rood and its statues and its pictured windows and its symbolic carving, was full of instruction. The detail of the prayers and ceremonial might be known only to the clergy, but their general characteristics, perceived and felt by all, were full of lessons. If the priests had few superfluous books, those which they were bound to have, and which made up what we now call the Breviary, the Missal, and the Ritual, contained an inexhaustible store of instruction, moral and dogmatic, and of more recent as well as old-world history. And it was by means of the Sundays and festivals that the sublime mysteries of psalm and prophecy, the holy and pathetic records of the gospels, and the faithful accomplishment of divine promises in the Church's history, were gradually taught to priests, and so to the people according to their measure.

We have seen that more than a hundred days, between a third and fourth part of the year, were set apart for this direct and, so to say, exclusive action of religion. No one can doubt that it was a sufficient proportion of human life if men profited by it. But it may be said: Was it not too much? Though the service of God is the general end of all human life, are men capable in their present state of devoting so great a part of it exclusively to the thought of what is spiritual and eternal? Do not the very complaints, so constantly repeated, of the violation of the festivals by work or commerce show that they were felt to be too great a burden? I reply that I can find no evidence of this, but the contrary. They were a burden to sloth or to covetousness, not to industry, commerce or the happiness and mirth of the nation. We read of the people rising in revolt against crushing taxes and exactions, and demanding their abolition; but not of such complaints against the burden of the holidays.\* Markets and fairs, in other words the principal commercial transac-

\* Latimer complained before Convocation, but his reasons were such as would have been equally valid against making holiday on Sundays.



# HOLY WEEK

tions of the people, tended ever to encroach on the festivals; but the festivals in no way encroached on them. The abolition of festivals or lessening of their number would have been no boon to packmen, merchants, or shopkeepers, for it would simply have prevented those gatherings which they sought to turn to their own profit. Nor did pastoral pursuits suffer seriously from the number of holidays. Herds and flocks required little care, and what they demanded was not forbidden at any time. Only a small part of the country was under tillage; rotation of crops was little known, and the earth had often to lie fallow. The population was sufficient for the culture in spite of holidays, and the produce sufficient for the population. Tradesmen and artisans at the present day seldom care to work more than four or five days in a week on an average. It could be no great hardship, then, for the Church to bid them rest two days in the seven when manufactures were in comparatively small demand.\*

On the other hand, it would not be easy to over-estimate the effect of the holidays in enhancing the joy and interest of life. One of our best antiquarian writers, the Rev. Joseph Hunter, makes an observation regarding chantries, or foundations for daily Masses, which may be applied still more truly to the whole subject of Divine worship which we are now considering. "The chantries," he says,† "will be found to be closely connected with the social habits and even the recreations of the people. They formed one of the provisions which, in early ages, broke the monotony of country life, without science, without literature and without politics." So that here again the Blessed Sacrament is found to have been the source of innocent joy, rest and recreation, and "piety had the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."‡

## CHAPTER VI. HOLY WEEK

THE ceremonies of Holy Week have from the earliest ages had a special character, and it would be most interesting to trace their development and variations. But we must confine ourselves to those which regard immediately the Blessed Sacrament. Though it is the Passion of her Divine Spouse which absorbs the whole soul of the Church in that week, yet since the Blessed Sacrament is the divinely-appointed Rite for the commemoration of our LORD's death, and this sacred Rite was instituted on the very eve of His Passion, it was natural that the Holy Eucharist, whether as sacrifice or sacrament, should occupy a large part in the observances of Holy Week and Easter. And this is so truly the case, that it will be necessary to devote a considerable space to the rites of almost each successive day.

### *Palm Sunday*

AT least from the days of St Augustine there had been in England a procession on Palm Sunday in memory of our LORD's triumphal entry into

\* [There is another consideration also to be taken into account. Many of these days of rest were not strictly enforced even by the highest authority. The Decree of Archbishop Simon Mephram, regarding Good Friday, enacts: "By the authority of the present council we strictly prohibit that in future anyone shall occupy himself with servile work on that day or should do anything else which is inconsistent with its devout celebration. Nevertheless we do not by this

law mean to lay a burden on the poor, nor put any obstacle in the way of the rich to prevent their affording the customary assistance for charity's sake, to help on the tillage of their poorer neighbours." See Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, Bk. II, Tit. 3, De Feriis, and cf. *The Nineteenth Century*, July, 1899, pp. 44-45.]

† *Essay on the Nature, Purpose, and Resources of Topography*, printed in the *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute* for 1847, p. 90. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

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Jerusalem. St Aldhelm, in the seventh century, declares that this was done in reliance on ancient authority.\* Alcuin, in the next century, informs us that during this procession the holy Gospel was carried on a feretory. But it does not seem that a procession of the Blessed Sacrament on this day was known in England before the Norman Conquest. It was probably introduced by Lanfranc, for Matthew Paris says that the Directory, which had been drawn up by Lanfranc for the Abbey of Bec,† was soon adopted in the larger Benedictine abbeys in England.

Lanfranc's directions for Palm Sunday are as follows: ‡

"After tierce the abbot blesses the palms and flowers. The palms are carried by the abbot and other dignitaries, branches and flowers by the rest. All the bells are rung while the procession leaves the choir. Servants lead the way with the banners, then a lay-brother with holy water, two others with crosses, and two with candlesticks and lighted tapers, two with thuribles. . . . Then two subdeacons carrying two books of the Gospels, followed by the lay monks. Next the boys with their masters, then the rest of the brethren two and two, and lastly the abbot." During the procession antiphons were sung. The Directory thus continues:

"A little before daybreak a place has been prepared, to which the Body of our LORD has been carried by two priests and placed in a shrine. When the procession reaches this place it halts, and the two priests vested in white come forward. The banner and cross-banners having moved forward, the two priests take up the feretory with the Body of CHRIST and stand still. The procession is ranged around and antiphons are sung, at the end of each of which they genuflect. When the abbot intones the antiphon *Ave Rex noster*, the bearers of the feretory go forward, preceded by the banners and crosses, and pass up between the lines of the rest of the procession. As the Blessed Sacrament passes they genuflect two and two. Then they follow in procession till they reach the gates of the city, where a halt or station is made, and the feretory is laid on a table covered with a pall, in the entrance to the gates. The gateway is adorned with curtains and rich hangings.

"Then the boys sing the *Gloria, Laus*, and other antiphons, and at the *Ingrediente Domino* the procession returns, the great bells of the city ringing during the rest of the procession. When the procession returning comes to the gates of the monastery, another station is made before a temporary altar. Antiphons are sung. The Blessed Sacrament is again taken up, and they enter the church, and make a third station before the crucifix uncovered for the purpose. Then the Mass begins."

These rites, after they had been brought into England, continued to be observed in many of the greater churches. Simon, the nineteenth abbot of St Albans,§ who lived in the latter part of the twelfth century, was a friend of St Thomas of Canterbury, and a great benefactor of his own church. Among other magnificent gifts, he bestowed on it a splendid shrine to be used on Palm Sunday, which Matthew Paris, who had seen it and was a good judge of art calls *Vas mirificum*. "He decreed," writes his biographer, "that on Palm Sunday the Body of the LORD should be reverently placed in this shrine, and be carried by one of the brethren, venerable for character as

\* *De Laude Virg.* cap. 15.

† [As Wilkins, who has printed these statutes (*Concilia*, 1, pp. 328-361), implies, and as Mr Edmund Bishop (*Bosworth Psalter*, pp. 32 and 63-64) has recently insisted, these ordinances were compiled by

Lanfranc for the use of Canterbury in particular. Lanfranc declared that certain festivals "excellētius in nostra ecclesia oportere agi propter primatem sedem," *ib.* p. 328.]

‡ *Opera Lanfranci*, vol. 1, p. 100, ed. Giles.

§ *Life*, by Matthew Paris.



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well as for age, clothed in a white chasuble, to a pavilion erected in the churchyard and composed of the most precious stuffs, unless the inclemency of the weather should prevent it. Thence it should be carried to the chapter-house, two of the brethren in copes honourably supporting the arms of him who carried the shrine. In the same manner, followed by the procession, it should at length be carried back to the church with the greatest veneration. And this should all be done," adds the chronicler, "that the faithful may see with what honour the most Holy Body of CHRIST should be treated, which at this season offered Itself to be scourged, crucified and buried."

*The Hereford Missal*\* also makes mention of the altar of repose to which the Body of CHRIST with relics of the saints had been carried in the morning.

*The York Missal*† prescribes that "during the blessing and distribution of the palms, the Body of the LORD is to be carried to the appointed place by a priest in a silver cope, withthurifers, acolyths and deacons. The officiant (after the arrival of the procession) genuflects to our LORD three times, saying: *Dignus es, Domine Deus noster, accipere gloriam et honorem*, "Thou art worthy, O LORD our God, to receive glory and honour," and the choir follows his example each time with the same words. Then the Blessed Sacrament is carried back to the church by another way." This ceremony took place outside the church if the weather permitted, and the Blessed Sacrament was placed under a tent (*tentorium*). If the weather was bad, the Blessed Sacrament was carried to the altar of our Lady and there honoured.‡

An old commentator on the Sarum rites, Clement Maideston, describes the procession round the parish church. His account is thus given, though not verbatim, by Dr Rock:§ "While they were going from the north side towards the east, and had just ended the gospel read at the first station, the shrine with the sacrament, surrounded with lights in lanterns and streaming banners, and preceded by a silver cross and a thurifer with incense, was borne forwards so that they might meet it, as it were, and our LORD was hailed by the singers chanting, *Ecce rex venit mansuetus*. Kneeling lowly down and kissing the ground, they saluted the Sacrament again and again, in many appropriate sentences out of Holy Writ; and the red wooden cross" (which was always used in Lenten processions, and which had preceded the procession issuing from the church) now "withdrew from the presence of the silver crucifix. The whole procession now moved to the south side of the close, or churchyard, where in cathedrals a temporary erection was made for the boys who sang the *Gloria, laus*, as a halt was made for a second station." In parish churches this station was generally made at the churchyard cross, which on this day was decked with flowers and palm branches.|| "From the stone cross, . . . the procession went next to the western doorway, if the church had one, otherwise to the south porch, and there paused to make its third station. The door itself was shut, but after a while flew wide open. The priests who bore the shrine with the Blessed Sacrament and relics, stepped forwards with the heavenly burden, and held it up on high at the doorway, so that all that went in had to go under this shrine; and thus

\* *Hereford Missal*, published by Rev. W. Henderson (1874), vol. II, p. 80.

† *York Missal*, Surtees Society (1874), p. 86.

‡ [Mr Edmund Bishop, in a short but very important paper on the procession of the *Corps Saint* on Palm Sunday, entitled, "Holy Week Rites Compared," and published in the *Transactions of the Society of S. Osmund* (vol. I,) shows the existence of a close relationship between the Rite of Hereford and that of

Rouen. On the other hand, he does not consider that the Sarum Use was directly indebted to Rouen, and is inclined to think that it is perhaps more probable that the introduction of the Blessed Sacrament into the procession was of Anglo-Saxon rather than Norman origin. *Ib.* p. 100.]

§ *Church of our Fathers*, vol. III, part II, pp. 227, 228.

|| *Church of our Fathers*, p. 229.

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the procession came back into church, each one bowing his head as he passed beneath the Sacrament."

A gentleman named Roger Martin, who died in 1580, longing for the restoration of the Catholic religion, has left a most interesting account of his parish church of Melford, in Suffolk, and of some of the ceremonies which he remembered in it in his youth. He thus describes Palm Sunday: "Upon Palm Sunday the Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession about the churchyard, under a fair canopy, borne by four yeomen. The procession coming to the church gate went westward, and they with the Blessed Sacrament went eastward; and when the procession came against the door of Mr Clopton's aisle, they, with the Blessed Sacrament and with a little bell and singing, approached at the east end of our Lady's chapel; at which time a boy with a thing in his hand pointed to it, signifying a prophet, as I think, and sang, standing upon the turret that is on the said Mr Clopton's aisle door: *Ecce Rex tuus venit*, etc. And then all did kneel down, and then, rising up, went singing together into the church, and coming near the porch, a boy or one of the clerks did cast over among the boys flowers and singing cakes."\*

This description brings us down to the very days of the Reformation, and proves that even the establishment of the Corpus CHRISTI feast and procession had not caused the abandonment of the more ancient one of Palm Sunday. The spirit of the whole rite was that of reparation, and thus harmonized well with Holy Week; but as it tended to take a festal rather than a penitential character, we need not regret its present disuse.

## *Shear Thursday, etc.*

THE *Cæna Domini*, or day on which our LORD celebrated His last supper with His disciples, before the institution of the Holy Eucharist, is now commonly called Holy Thursday. This name belonged in old England to Ascension Day, and the Thursday in Holy Week was called Shear or Shorp Thursday, or Maundy Thursday. The first name is probably derived from the public absolution given to penitents on that day, though John Myrc in the fourteenth century supposed it to allude to the hair and beard cutting which was usual as a preparation for Easter.† Maundy is by some derived from "maund," a basket, because of the gifts made to the poor at the washing of the feet.‡ By others it is thought to be a corruption of Mandatum Thursday, from the antiphon, *Mandatum novum*, "A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another," which was sung at that ceremony. But with these observances I am not concerned, and must refer my reader to the accounts given by Dr Rock.§

One of the principal associations in the mind of a Catholic of the present day with Holy Thursday is that of adoration at the sepulchre, and many are puzzled to discover why our LORD's burial is honoured before His death. In order to explain this seeming anomaly, it will be necessary to give an historical account of the changes which have taken place in the popular observances of Holy Week, much more than in the approved ritual itself. It will then be understood that before the Reformation in England the adoration of our LORD in the sepulchre did not precede but followed the celebration of His death on

\* *Views of the most Interesting Churches, &c.*, by J. P. Neale (1825), vol. II, where the history of Martin's MS. is given. [Abundant details about the Palm Sunday procession may also be found in Bishop Pecock's *Repressor* (Rolls Series), pp. 203 seq.; Baldwin Brown, *Arts in Early England*, I, p. 367; Thurston, *Lent and Holy Week*, pp. 204 seq.]

† [*Shear*, or *shere*, means clean, and Fr Bridgett is undoubtedly right in considering that it has nothing directly to do here with cutting hair.]

‡ [This is now rejected by scholars. The only admissible derivation is from *mandatum*.]

§ *Church of our Fathers*, vol. III, part II, pp. 74 and 235.



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Good Friday, and had no connexion whatever with the Thursday. But when the peculiar rite of the sepulchre, which belonged to the Friday evening and the Saturday, was abandoned, the popular devotion was transferred to the adoration at the altar of repose of Holy Thursday, which then took a new development, and the name of Sepulchre, though now an anachronism, was so appropriate to Holy Week that it has clung to the minds of the people, and has even been adopted by liturgical writers.

1. First, then, the compilers of the *Regularis Concordia*,\* for the guidance of the great Benedictine monasteries in England in the time of King Edgar (tenth century), state that they have been careful, while consulting foreign authorities, to retain all good customs of their own land. This document gives the following directions. On Thursday, after the midnight office and morning hours, the floor of the church was washed by lay monks, while the priests with their assistants washed the altars with holy water. No Mass could be said that day at an altar until it had been washed. When Sext had been said (i.e., about noon) the Mass was celebrated, at which the poor were present whose feet were to be washed.

When None had been said (i.e., at 3 p.m.) monks went to the door of the church to fetch fire struck from the flint, as we do still on Holy Saturday. In England at that time this ceremony took place on each of the last three days of Holy Week. Instead of a crucifix they carried a spear with the representation of a serpent, and the candle which was carried was in the same form, no doubt to commemorate the serpent in the desert which our LORD has explained as a type of Himself on the Cross. Then followed the celebration of the principal Mass: "at which Mass, as well as those of the following days, communion will be given both to the brethren and to all the faithful, the Eucharist being reserved in sufficient quantity for the communion of Friday." It appears from what follows that the Eucharist was reserved in the sacristy; but nothing is said of watching before It, nor was the place of reservation called the sepulchre. This name is, however, used in connexion with one of the ceremonies of Good Friday.

The fathers, without prescribing, approve of a custom of certain religious, which they think may conduce to strengthen the faith of the ignorant and of converts (*indocti vulgi ac neophytorum*). A place was prepared at one side of the altar, to look like a tomb, and a curtain drawn round it. When the solemn adoration of the cross (made as it is at the present day) was concluded, the deacons came and wrapped the crucifix in a winding-sheet, and then carried it to the tomb, singing the antiphons: *In pace in idipsum; Habitabit; and Caro mea requiescet in spe*. When they had laid the cross in the tomb they sang: *Sepulto Domino signatum est monumentum, ponentes milites qui custodirent eum*. The cross was to remain in this place until Easter morning, and, if the community was large enough, two or three of the brethren might remain watching reverently before it during the night singing psalms. The cross having thus been removed, the deacon and subdeacon brought from the sacristy the Body of the LORD which had been reserved from the preceding day, and the Mass of the Presanctified was concluded as at present, except that all were silently communicated.

The Holy Saturday offices and Mass were very much as they are at present, except that they took place late in the afternoon.†

On Easter morning the ceremonies at the Sepulchre were very curious. One

\* Migne, *Patrologia*, tom. cxxxvii.

bratur missa), says Giraldus in the twelfth century

† "In Sabbato magno circa noctis initium" (cele- (Gemma Eccles. p. 24, Rolls ed.)

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of the monks, clothed with an alb and bearing a palm branch in his hand, was to go and seat himself in the sepulchre to represent the angel. Then three others, vested in copes, and carrying thuribles with incense in their hands, were to advance slowly towards the sepulchre, as if in search of something, to represent the holy women going with spices and ointment to anoint our LORD's Body. When they drew near the tomb, the angel sang in a low and sweet voice: *Quem quæritis*, "Whom seek ye?" The three replied together: "JESUS of Nazareth." The angel answered: "He is not here, he has risen, as He said." At which words the three, turning towards the choir, sang *Alleluia, surrexit Dominus*, "Alleluia, the LORD has risen." The angel then recalled them with the words: "Come, see the place where the LORD lay:" and with these words rose, and withdrew the veil, and showed them the place, without the cross, but with the linen in which it was wrapped folded together. The three put down their thuribles and took the winding-sheet and unfolded it towards the choir, singing: "The LORD has risen from the tomb," and spread the linen on the altar. Then the prior intoned the *Te Deum*, and all the bells were rung.\*

In the whole of these rites of Holy Week, with the exception of those just described regarding the sepulchre, the Anglo-Saxon Church conformed to the ritual brought by St Augustine from Rome. In the Sacramentary of Pope Gelasius, and in the *Liber Sacramentorum* of St Gregory, as well as in the most ancient *Ordo Romanus* (of the eighth century), the prescriptions regarding the reservation of the Blessed Eucharist on the Thursday, the Mass of the Pre-sanctified and the general communion on the Friday, and the Mass and communion on the Saturday, are precisely the same as those which were sanctioned again in the tenth century in England for the monastic churches, and which remained in use until they were somewhat modified by the ritual brought from Bec by Lanfranc.

It is correct then to say that no special honours besides the *Mass and communion* were as yet paid to the Blessed Sacrament in England on the Thursday in Holy Week, and that the rite of the sepulchre belonged to the Friday evening and to the Saturday, not to the Thursday; and that it appertained to the Crucifixion, not to the Holy Eucharist.

2. In the Directory of the Monastery of Bec,† set in order by Lanfranc in the eleventh century, though the rites were not originated by him, we find the following particulars.

On Thursday a low Mass was said after Sext, for the poor whose feet were to be washed, and they were to be communicated with *unconsecrated* bread, and without any formula of words (i.e., from the holy loaf), and then a repast was given them. After None the solemn Mass was sung, at which as many hosts were consecrated as might suffice for that day and the following; and it is prescribed that during these four days, that is, the last three of Holy Week, and Easter Sunday, no brother should abstain from communion without a reasonable cause. While vespers were being sung after Mass, a priest with assistants carried the Body of the LORD to a place most beautifully adorned for its reception (*locum decentissime præparatum*). Incense was offered and a light was to be kept burning before the place of reservation. On Good Friday afternoon, when the adoration of the Cross was finished, the priest with his assistants went to the place of repose, and all adored the Body of the LORD on

\* A similar and still more elaborate ceremony was in use in the church of Rouen. Words and music may be found in Migne, *Patrologia*, tom. cXLVII, p. 139.

† Migne, *Patrologia*, tom. cl., or *Opera Lanfranci*, ed. Giles. [As pointed out above, these are directions framed for use not at Bec but at Canterbury.]



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both knees (*adorent omnes fratres corpus Domini flexis genibus*). It was incensed and carried to the high altar, and the rite proceeded as at present, except that all communicated.

In Lanfranc's Directory the sepulchre is nowhere mentioned, for neither was that name given to the place where the Eucharist was reserved from Thursday to Friday, nor is there any mention of the ceremony of burying the Crucifix.

Both these are, however, found in another Norman treatise by a contemporary of Lanfranc. John, brother of Richard, Duke of Normandy, was Archbishop of Rouen, and died in 1079. In his treatise on the Offices of the Church,\* he gives directions for the honourable reservation of the Blessed Sacrament from Thursday to Friday, and orders that a light be kept burning before It until the extinction of the last taper in the office of Tenebræ on Thursday night. After the adoration of the Crucifix on Friday it was washed with wine and water, and the ablution was given to the priests and people to drink after the Good Friday Communion, in memory of the blood and water which flowed from our LORD's side. The crucifix, after being washed, was carried to the sepulchre, there to remain till Sunday, and thence it was to be triumphantly taken early on Sunday morning, while the choir sang the anthem *Surrexit Dominus*.

From these documents it is quite clear that originally the name of Sepulchre was in no way connected with the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursday, but with honours paid to the Crucifix from Friday to Sunday. Nor was the name given to the altar or place of reservation at any time in England previous to the Reformation. From the

first it designated the place where the Crucifix was kept after the adoration on Good Friday, and it continued to do so to the end; but with this difference, that at the outset it had no reference to the Blessed Sacrament, whereas in process of time devotion was more directed to the Blessed Sacrament reserved with the Crucifix than to the Crucifix itself.

3. The precise period when it was appointed that the Body of our LORD should be placed in the sepulchre with the Crucifix, is not known. A French manuscript of the thirteenth century shows that the ceremonial described in the *Regularis Concordia* of St Dunstan was by that time transferred to the Blessed Sacrament.† *The Sarum Directory of St Osmund*, edited by Dr Rock,



THE EASTER SEPULCHRE AT HECKINGTON

\* *Ib.* tom. cXLVII, p. 50.

† *Office du Sépulchre selon l'usage de l'Abbaye* p. 433.

d'Origny, Paris, 1858. Vide *Union Review* for 1870,

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is of the thirteenth century, and we cannot be sure that no addition was made after the death of the saint in 1099.\* His directions for Good Friday are wanting, but the taking the Body of our LORD from the sepulchre early on Easter morning is mentioned, as well as that of the Crucifix: *In die Paschæ ante Matut. duo excellentiores presbyteri in superpelliciis prius incensato sepulchro, cum magna veneratione corpus Dominicum super altare deponant, deinde crucem de sepulchro tollant.*†

4. These ceremonies continued to be observed in England until the death of Henry VIII, with some variations and with greater or less solemnity according to the rank and riches of the church. The author of *The Durham Rites* thus describes what he had seen perhaps in the days of Wolsey: "After the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday it was carried to the Sepulchre, which was set up on that morning on the north side of the choir near unto the high altar, and there laid with great devotion, with another image of our Saviour, in whose breast they enclosed with great reverence the most holy and blessed Sacrament of the altar, censing it and praying to it on their knees a great space, and setting two tapers lighted before it, which burned till Easter Day in the morning.

"On Easter Day, between three and four in the morning,‡ two of the eldest monks came to the Sepulchre, set up on Good Friday after the Passion, all covered with red velvet and embroidered with gold, and then censed it on their knees. Then rising, they took from the Sepulchre an extreme beautiful image of our Saviour, representing the Resurrection, with a cross in His hand, in the breast whereof was enclosed, in the brightest crystal, the Holy Sacrament of the altar, through which crystal the Blessed Host was conspicuous to the beholders. When the anthem *Christus resurgens* was sung, they carried this, upon a velvet cushion all embroidered, to the high altar, knelt, and censed it. When the anthem was sung they took up again the cushion and statue, and proceeded to the south choir door, where there were four ancient gentlemen belonging to the prior, appointed to attend their coming, holding up a very rich canopy of purple velvet, tasseled round about with red silk and gold fringe; and they bore this canopy over the Blessed Sacrament carried by the monks about the church, the whole choir waiting on It with torches and a great number of lights, all singing, rejoicing and praying to God most devoutly, till they returned to the High Altar, whereon they placed the said Image, there to remain till the Ascension."§

Ceremonies very similar to the above were prescribed in the various uses throughout England and Scotland. Thus the Hereford Missal orders that three Hosts be consecrated on Holy Thursday, one for the day, one to be consumed on Good Friday, and one to be placed with the Cross in the Sepulchre.|| When the two reserved Hosts had been carried to the place appointed,

\* [Mr Walter H. Frere, who has edited this Sarum Directory, or, as he calls it, "the Consuetudinary," in a much more thorough and satisfactory way, considers that as a whole it represents the usages observed c. 1210, but that portions are of an earlier date. See *The Use of Sarum*, I, p. 20.]

† Rock, vol. IV, p. 53.

‡ A similar rubric is found in the Sarum Breviary for Easter Day, not in the Missal, since the ceremony did not immediately precede Mass.

§ The *Durham Rites*, pp. 10, 11 (Surtees Soc. ed.) [This quotation faithfully represents the substance, but is not textually accurate; see Fowler's Edition,

pp. 11-12.] Silver images of our risen LORD with a beril in the breast, to receive the Blessed Sacrament at Easter, were in Wells and Lincoln Cathedrals.

|| [This may represent the use of Hereford immediately before the Reformation, but not at an earlier date. The rite of burying the Blessed Sacrament was known at Salisbury from the beginning of the thirteenth century, but at Hereford, as at Rouen, only the cross was buried, and it was placed in the sepulchre immediately after the adoration and before the procession with the Blessed Sacrament. At Sarum the cross was not buried until vespers had been said. See Mr E. Bishop in the paper mentioned above.]



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the altars were stripped and washed. On Good Friday the Cross after adoration was washed with wine and water at the door of the sepulchre, and in the meantime the Body of CHRIST was brought and honourably placed with the Cross in the sepulchre. Incense was offered, a candle was lighted, and the door was closed.

The rubrics of the York Missal mention that others who wish may communicate with the priest on Good Friday. It is evident, therefore, that other particles were reserved for this purpose as well as for the sick—whether in the sepulchre or not is not said. Indeed, the York Missal, though giving directions about the sepulchre for the Cross, does not explicitly order the Blessed Sacrament to be placed there.

The Arbuthnot Missal proves that the devotion of the sepulchre extended to Scotland. The Blessed Sacrament, carried by a priest in surplice without shoes, was placed with the Cross in the sepulchre. One taper at least was to burn before the sepulchre until the procession on Easter Sunday; but it was extinguished with all other lights during the *Benedictus* of the Tenebræ, and during the striking of the fire on Holy Saturday, until the lighting of the Paschal candle.

Such rites spoke for themselves and required little explanation, yet we find them made a theme for instruction. Thus the *Liber Festivalis* says: "The veil that all this Lent hath been drawn between us and the choir betokeneth the Passion that was hid and unknown till the day came.\* The which these days be done away and the altar openly showed to all the people. . . . The altar stone betokeneth CHRIST's body that was drawn on the cross as a skin of parchment on a harrow, so that all His bones might be told. And the besoms that the altar is washen with are the thorns that He was crowned with. The water and the wine that it is washen with betokeneth the blood and the water that ran down from His wound that was in His side pierced with a spear. The wine that is poured upon the altar on the five crosses betokeneth the blood that ran down from His principal wounds of His body," and so on.

5. Roger Edgeworth, canon of Salisbury in the time of Henry VIII, writes: "The devout ceremonies of Palm Sundays in processions, and on Good Fridays about the laying of the cross and Sacrament into the sepulchre, gloriously arrayed, be so necessary to succour the lability of man's remembrance, that if they were not used once every year, it is to be feared that CHRIST's Passion would soon be forgotten. The crucifixes erected in churches and crosses by the highways were intended for the same purpose, although some pestiferous persons have overthrown them and destroyed them, for the very contempt of CHRIST's Passion, more than to find money under them, as they have pretended."†

A very few years later they needed no such cloak for their impieties, since both Edward and Elizabeth became the leaders of such "pestiferous persons," whom their father would have burnt; and Edgeworth's foreboding has been too truly fulfilled. Even Good Friday no longer suggests a thought of our LORD's death to the multitude.

On Good Friday, 1538, Bishop Longland closed a sermon preached before Henry in these words: "In the mean season I shall exhort you all in our LORD

\* The Lenten veil was stretched across the sanctuary on the Saturday before Quinquagesima. It was lifted during the gospel, and on feasts of nine lessons. On the Wednesday in Holy Week, at the words of the Passion, "The veil of the Temple was rent in the midst" (Luke xxiii, 45), it fell to the ground. The

crosses, images, and relics, and the pyx containing the Holy Eucharist, were veiled on the Monday of the first week of Lent, and continued so until Matins early on Easter Sunday. (*Tract. S. Osmundi*, cap. 102, apud Rock, iv, p. 68.)

† Edgeworth's *Sermons*, fol. 94 (ed. 1557.)

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GOD, as of old custom hath here this day been used, every one of you, ere you depart, with most entire devotion, kneeling before our SAVIOUR LORD GOD, this our JESUS CHRIST, which hath suffered so much for us, to whom we are so much bounden, who lieth in yonder sepulchre, in honour of Him, of His passion and death, and of His five wounds, to say five Pater Nosters, five Aves, and one Creed, that it may please His merciful goodness to make us partners of the merits of His most glorious passion, blood and death.”\*

This appeal of Bishop Longland was in form both orthodox and pious; and yet he and the king who listened to him were at that moment inflicting an injury on CHRIST’s mystical body by schism, as great as that of the Jews upon His natural body. The king and bishop both forgot the truth expressed in the words of Holy Scripture: “The beginning of quarrels is as when one letteth out water” (Prov. xvii, 14). They had opened the sluice gates of schism, and the waters of heresy soon poured in and swept away even what Henry and Longland still venerated. The above sermon was preached in the Lent of 1538. Exactly ten years later all veneration of the Holy Cross had been prohibited by the council of that very heir to his throne whom Henry had so eagerly longed for; and, in the following year the sepulchre was abolished and the belief of ages in the Blessed Sacrament laughed to scorn.

The historian of Worcester has published a contemporary manuscript giving the exact dates of these changes in that city:†

“A.D. 1548. March 15 being Palm Sunday, no palms hallowed, no cross borne on Easter Eve, no fire hallowed, but the Paschal taper and the font. On Easter day the Pix, with the Sacrament in it, was taken out of the sepulchre, they singing, ‘CHRIST is risen,’ without procession. On Good Friday, no creeping to the cross.”

“Also on October 20 was taken away the cup with the body of CHRIST from the high altar of St Mary’s Church” (i.e., the cathedral) “and in other churches and chapels.”

“A.D. 1549. No Sepulchre or service of Sepulchre on Good Friday. On Easter Even no paschal hallowed, nor fire, nor incense, nor font. On 23rd April this year was Mass, matins, evensong, and all other services in English. All books of divine service were brought to the bishop, mass-books, graduals, pies, port and legends, and were burnt.”

Once more in Queen Mary’s days an attempt was made to restore the old devotions. The churchwardens’ accounts which survive bear curious evidence to all these changes; and it is sad to think that we only learn how widespread was this devotion from the documents that tell of its destruction.

Thus, in the list of church furniture destroyed by order of Queen Elizabeth in the first years of her reign, we find constant mention of Easter Sepulchres. Mr Peacock has published the returns of the churchwardens of Lincolnshire.‡ They comprise 153 churches, and explicit mention is made of at least fifty-one Easter Sepulchres as having been destroyed, and probably most of these had been made in the reign of Mary to replace others burnt or broken up under Edward.

Many of these were of wood and were either burnt or used for profane purposes. Thus the churchwardens of Belton report: “Item. A Sepulker with little Jack, broken in peces one year ago, but little Jack was broken in peces this year.” “Jack in a box” was the nickname which the miscreants of the

\* Sermon printed by Petyt.

† Green’s *History of Worcester*, vol. 1, p. 127. (Extracts from Bishop Blandford’s MS.)

‡ *Church Furniture, &c.*, edited by E. Peacock, F.S.A., from the Episcopal Register of Lincoln, entitled *Inventarium Monumentorum Superstitionis*.



## HOLY WEEK

Reformation gave to the Blessed Sacrament, and these fellows probably mean by "little Jack" the pyx for the sepulchre. Though in Edward's days a law had been made prohibiting the use of such opprobrious language, it was as much a dead letter as the proclamation of the first year of Elizabeth, which forbade the use of scurrilous language in controversy; and the churchwardens of Belton did not fear to draw any rebuke from him who was now intruded into the see of Lincoln. Indeed, the tone of the reports throughout this volume not only proves the utter havoc wrought in the souls of many poor villagers by sacrilegious larceny and ribald controversy, but it proves also the estimate these men had formed of their new religious guides. They knew no better way to ingratiate themselves into their favour than to vie with one another in scurrility and blasphemy.

At Croxton, the wardens report, "Item, a sepulker, whearof is made a shelf to set dishes on"; at Denton, "One sepulchre sold to John Orson, and he hath made a presse thereof to laie clothes therein"; at Stallingbrock, "A sepulker, defacid, whearof we made a bear (bier) to carie the dead corps and other things"; at Durrington, "Sepulker was broke and sold to men who have made a henne penne of it."

6. But enough of these horrors. Let us go back to better days. These reports show that the sepulchre was often a construction of wood. This framework was in part richly painted and gilt and hung with cloths of silk and gold or silver tissue, and it sometimes supported candles which were kept lighted during the hours of reservation.

Sir Roger Martin, whose account of Palm Sunday has been already quoted, writes as follows about the sepulchre in his parish church of Melford: "In the quire there was a fair painted frame of timber, to be set up about Maundy Thursday, with holes for a number of fair tapers to stand in before the sepulchre, and to be lighted in service time. Sometimes it was set overthwart the quire, before the high altar, the sepulchre being always placed and finely garnished, at the north end of the high altar, between that and Mr Clopton's little chapel there, in a vacant place of the wall, I think upon a tomb of one of his ancestors. The said frame with the tapers was set near to the steps going up to the said altar. Lastly (i.e., latterly) it was used to be set up all along Mr Clopton's aisle, with a door made to go out of the rood-loft into it."\*

There is an entry in the churchwardens' account of St Peter's, Sheffield,† just before the death of Queen Mary: "Paid, for a cloth to the sepulchre-house containing 12 yards at 8d. the yard, 8s. Paid to Hugh, painter, for painting the sepulchre-cloth, 4s. Paid for setting up of the Resurrection, 7d." The last entry seems to indicate a change of scene on Holy Saturday evening or Easter Sunday Morning. The churchwardens of St Margaret's, Westminster, in 1520, make an entry in their accounts "for the setting up of *God's house* and taking it down again," indicating by this expression, it would seem, the Easter Sepulchre.

But in some churches of the Decorated and Perpendicular periods these sepulchres were permanent erections of stone, elaborately carved and ornamented. There is a beautiful specimen in the choir of Lincoln Cathedral; others may be seen at Heckington and Navenby, Lincolnshire, at Northwold in Norfolk and Hawton, Nottinghamshire.‡ Sometimes the sepulchre was under a low arch in the wall, but occasionally it was a very grand and beautiful structure. That of Hawton is about twelve feet high and seven in breadth. It is let

\* Neale's *Views of the most Interesting Churches*, vol. II.

† *History of Hallamshire*, by Joseph Hunter, p. 246 (ed. 1869).

‡ [Further information with a useful list of existing remains may be found in Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, pp. 74-78.]

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into the wall, and is divided into three compartments, representing in sculpture the sleeping Roman guard, the Resurrection and the Ascension. In the beautiful church of Patrington in Yorkshire, above the sleeping soldiers is a shelf or recess, above that our LORD's Resurrection, surmounted by another recess. These recesses were probably filled with carved and gilded woodwork.

In Sir Roger Martin's description of the Easter Sepulchre at Melford it may have been noticed that a high tomb beneath an arch served the purpose of an altar of repose. Such tombs were sometimes erected for that very end. "I will that there be made," wrote Thomas Windsor in his will (A.D. 1479), "a plain tomb of marble of a competent height, to the intent that it may bear the Blessed Body of our LORD at the time of Easter, to stand upon the same; and mine arms and a convenient scripture to be set about the same tomb." This tomb was to be erected "in the north side of the choir of the church of our Lady of Stanwell, before the image of our Lady, where the sepulture of our LORD standeth."\* Similarly Thomas Lord Dacre, in A.D. 1531, writes: "My body to be buried in the parish church of Hurst Monceaux, on the north side of the high altar. I will that a tomb be there made for placing the sepulchre of our LORD, with all fitting furniture thereto, in honour of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Also I will that £100 be employed towards the lights about the said sepulchre, in wax tapers of ten pounds' weight each, to burn about it."†

Such documents as these not merely show a zeal for the beauty of God's house, and a most lively faith in our LORD's presence, but testify to a hope and love springing from the devotion of a lifetime rather than from a death-bed repentance. *Sub Umbra Illius quem desideraveram sedi*, might well have been selected for Thomas Windsor's "scripture." "I have reposed beneath the shadow of Him whom I have yearned after."

One more example of this devotion may be given. In the will of Eleanore, second wife and widow of Sir Roger Townsend, a justice of the Common Pleas, "dated November 9, 1499, she orders her body to be buried by the high altar, before our Blessed Lady, in the chancel of Rainham St Mary, and a new tomb to be made for her husband's and her bones; upon which tomb to be cunningly graven a sepulchre for Easter day, if a chapel be not made at her decease; and if a chapel be made, then she would be buried in the same, and her husband's bones to be had home into the same chapel, and the tomb to be made there."‡

Few persons could erect these costly monuments of their faith and love; yet among scraps of old paper accidentally preserved in worm-eaten parochial chests we sometimes come upon curious and interesting evidence that all classes took part in the great watching round our LORD's sepulchre of honour, in reparation for the watching of the perfidious Jews and blind heathen round His sepulchre of humiliation in Jerusalem.

Such is the 4s. 4d. set down in the churchwardens' accounts of St Margaret's, Westminster, in 1538, as "paid for mats for the parishioners to kneel upon when they revered their Maker." Such is the legacy of William Smyth in 1436 to St Mary's Church, Devizes, "for the maintenance of three sepulchre tapers."§ Such again is the entry in the books of Heybridge Church in 21st of King Henry VIII: "The *bachelors* of the parish of Heybridge have delivered the nine tapers, belonging to the sepulchre, at the feast of Easter, each containing five pounds of wax, and they have above all charges 5s. 10d.; and so remaineth in the stock, clearly above all forty-three pounds of wax, which

\* *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 352. This gentleman was an ancestor of the Earls of Plymouth.

† *Ib.* p. 653.

‡ Blomefield's *Norfolk*, vii, p. 132.

§ *Wiltshire Archæol. Magazine*, vol. 11, p. 252.



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resteth in the hands of Richard Langore, wax chandler. Also in the said year, the *maidens* of the said parish have delivered in the nine tapers belonging to the said sepulchre, at the feast of Easter, every taper containing five pounds of wax, and they have above all charges 2s. 10d.\* This rivalry between young men and maidens in doing honour to our LORD JESUS CHRIST is very beautiful, and could well be revived in our own day.

It would appear from an entry in the accounts of Wagtoft, Lincolnshire, in 1545, that there was, in that parish at least, an "Alderman of the Sepulchre Light." It is probable that his office was either to superintend the parish collections for providing light, or to regulate the burning of the tapers and the watching at the sepulchre. The corporation of Bridport† possesses a document of 15 Richard II, in which Robert Clement delivers 25s., which he had "to find wax candles before our LORD's Sepulture." During the day the parishioners relieved each other in the duty of adoration and recitation of psalms and litanies. At night the church would appear to have been closed, although the tapers still burnt and men were appointed to watch. At Walberswick, in Suffolk, in 1451, a small sum is paid "for watching of candel Estorne nytis"; and again at St Mary's, Devizes, in 1499, "to four men for keeping of the sepulchre two nights, 1s. 2d." Whether the adoration continued by night as well as by day in monasteries I cannot say. In the Constitutions of the Brigittine nuns of Syon, it is said that only two tapers were to burn during the nights of Friday and Saturday "in a more syker place for eschewing of perelle."‡

## CHAPTER VII. EASTER—THE COMMUNION

THE greatest festival in the year was undoubtedly that of our LORD's Resurrection. As such it has ever been selected, either in union with other days, or in preference to them, as the proper time for receiving Holy Communion. After what has already been said, a few words will suffice in regard to the Mass and office of the day. We shall then dwell on the general communion of the people which was certainly the characteristic feature of this festival throughout the Middle Ages.

Since England and France in the twelfth century may in ecclesiastical observances be considered one country, we may safely take as our guide John Belethus, a Parisian doctor of that age, who is considered by some to have been an Englishman by birth, and who frequently alludes to the slight variations in different countries in such a way as to show his knowledge of these matters was extensive, and that, when he makes no such distinction, he may be considered as describing what was the common practice of Western Christendom.

He tells us that all prepared for the great festival by taking baths, cutting the hair, trimming the beards, if laymen, or shaving clean if ecclesiastics, and by laying aside the dark-coloured garments worn in Lent and putting on in their place the best in the wardrobe, especially such as were white or glorious. § And all this was of course done to symbolize the glory of our LORD's and our own resurrection, as it had been symbolized by the angels around our LORD's tomb.

\* *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 177, 178.

† *Sixth Report of Historical MSS. Commission*, part 1, p. 476.

‡ Aungier's *History of Syon*, p. 350.

§ *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, cap. 114-119, Migne, tom. ccii.

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In proof of the universality of these observances, from the laws of Howell the Good, King of Wales, made in 926, we find that the chaplains of the king and queen were entitled to have as perquisites the garments in which their majesties did penance during Lent.\*

In harmony with the change in the outward aspect of the people was that of the material church. The Lenten veil which hung across the sanctuary, had been as it were rent in two on Wednesday in Holy Week, and the veils of the crosses and images were removed early on Sunday morning. The walls were hung with rich draperies, the seats and stalls in the choir adorned, and carpets laid before the high altar and on the steps of the bishop's throne.

Digressing for a moment I may here remark that, when carpets were rare and costly, and heating apparatus unknown, it was customary to strew the cold flags with hay or rushes, and on greater feasts to mix or replace these with leaves of box or ivy, sometimes mixed with flowers.† Festoons of leaves and flowers were also used on festivals to hang between or round the pillars, as may be gathered from entries like the following in churchwardens' accounts. "For rose garlands on Corpus Christi Day"; "for birch and broom at Midsummer"; "for rose garlands and ivy on St Martin's day"; and "for holly and ivy at Christmas."‡ It is, however, more certain that garlands of roses and of ivy were worn by both clergy and laity in processions, than that they were placed upon the altars, or elsewhere.

But to return to the Easter festival in the twelfth century. The crucifix now unveiled was raised aloft, a rich dorsal cloth hanging behind it, and sometimes banners at each side, to represent the victory of CHRIST and the unveiling of the mysteries of His Passion. The altar was adorned with the richest reliquaries and most splendidly bound gospels, reserved for that day alone. The altar frontal was to be of silk, of silver or of gold plates if the church possessed such riches; concerning which Beletus tells us of an interesting symbolic rite practised in some places in his day. In front of the rich antependium or altar frontal were hung three cloths. That nearest to the altar was red, it was covered with one of greyish tint, and that again with black. The matins were sung at early dawn, and during the singing of the psalms and reading of the first lesson the black cloth was alone seen. This represented the time before the law of Moses. At the end of the first lesson this was removed and the second or grey antependium was uncovered, representing the Mosaic dispensation. During the third lesson the red frontal was displayed, indicating the time of grace purchased by the Precious Blood. But when the *Te Deum* was intoned the red hanging also was removed, and the more brilliant white, or gold, or silver frontal foretold the eternal glory purchased by CHRIST's death and resurrection.

No one will despise this detail but those who are blind to the beauty and variety of nature, to the universal customs of human society, and who are regardless of the great rule:

Segnius irritant animam demissa per aures  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

Perhaps the word *fidelibus* may bear a sense not intended by the pagan poet; for the effect of the beauty or gloom of the sanctuary, as well as of all

\* Haddan and Stubbs, i, 227.

† In the rules of the great monastery of Abingdon, the sacristan is told when to place mats before the altars and when hay. Hay was to be strewed thickly on the eve of All Saints, the eve of Christmas, and the Monday in Holy Week. On Saturday in Easter week (after removal of carpets) ivy leaves were to be scat-

tered. On Pentecost, the Assumption, the Nativity of the B. Virgin (their dedication feast), and the feast of St Athelwold (their patron), rushes were laid in the choir and round about. (*Historia de Abingdon*, ii, 378, Rolls ed.)

‡ These are all taken from the *Churchwardens' Books of St Martin's*, Dulwich, London, in 1524, 1525.



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the Church's ceremonies, depends on the minds and eyes of "the faithful" being instructed and prepared for the impressions intended to be conveyed. How they were prepared for the joyous and triumphant impressions of Easter we may gather from what has been said of Lent and Holy Week. John Belethus goes on to tell us of a more immediate and still more affecting preparation. All those who were at enmity were to seek each other out for reconciliation, and the salutation between neighbours when they met was, "The LORD is risen," to which the reply was made, "Thanks be to GOD." At this time also workshops of men and women were to be closed, and no goods even exposed to sale but such as were required for consumption. Men condemned to the quarries or confined to prisons were to be allowed to share the common joy; domestic servants and the herdsmen and agricultural labourers to make holiday. "Nothing," says our author, "should be eaten on this Easter Day that has not received a blessing from a priest. In some regions the custom is to bring to the porch or neighbourhood of the church in large vessels whatever is to be set on the table that day, and the priest in sacred vestments and with the Easter holy water blesses all. The priest," he adds, "has a right to take a little from each at his choice for his own use. On this day, then, three virtues especially have to be practised: mercy towards the poor and strangers, by sending to them what they are unable to procure; liberality in entertaining friends and neighbours; and sobriety by being bountiful to others rather than to oneself."

He then explains the little lunch (*parvum prandiolum*) which it was the custom to make that day in the churches on bread and wine, after the communion. He commends the custom and attributes the origin to St Benedict. We have already seen in a former chapter how at a much later period it had degenerated into an abuse which excited the indignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, just as the abuse of the primitive love-feasts excited that of St Paul.

We are now brought to consider that which was the distinctive feature of this great day—the communion of the laity. As it was a day of general communion for all, so it was to most—as the historian of the Middle Ages must sorrowfully record—the solitary communion day of the year.

At one time, indeed, in Scotland, relaxation had gone so far that the neglect of Easter Communion was not merely tolerated, but even defended, and its reobservance was due in great measure to the zeal of St Margaret. This English princess had been married to Malcolm III at Dunfermline in 1070. She had built there a church "in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, for the redemption of the king's soul and of her own, and to obtain for her children prosperity in this life and in the next. She adorned the church with many ornaments, and she gave not a few vessels of solid and pure gold for the service of the altar."\* But she was not satisfied with increasing the external splendour of GOD's worship. The love of JESUS CHRIST which burnt in her own pure heart she wished to see kindled in every Christian heart throughout Scotland. In a council assembled by her influence, she and her husband, Malcolm, were present, and she took an active part in the reform of abuses. Amongst other things, according to Theodoric, her biographer, who was an eyewitness, "she bade them show why on Easter Day they neglected to receive the sacraments of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, as is the custom of the holy and Apostolic Church. They answered that the Apostle had said: 'He who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgement to himself.' 'And therefore because we acknowledge our-

\* Theodoricus, *Vita S. Marg.* cap. 1, *Acta SS*, tom. xxii.

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selves sinners, lest we eat and drink our own judgement, we fear to approach that mystery.' The queen replied: 'What, then, may none who are sinners take the holy mysteries? If so, then no mortal will take them, for no one is without the stain of sin, not even the child which is one day old upon the earth. But if no one ought to receive, why does our LORD say in the Gospel: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you"? But clearly the sentence you bring forward of the Apostle must be understood differently, as it was by the fathers. He does not assert that all sinners receive the sacraments of salvation unworthily. For when he had said: "He eats and drinks his own judgement," he added, "Not discerning the LORD's Body," that is, not separating it in faith from natural food. Such a man eats and drinks his own judgement. So also does he who without confession and repentance, with the filth of his crimes upon him, presumes to approach the sacred mysteries. But we who many days before, having confessed our sins, are chastened by penance, reduced by fasts, cleansed from the stains of sin by almsdeeds and by tears, draw near, on the day of the Resurrection of our LORD, to His table, in the Catholic faith, receive the Flesh and Blood of the immaculate Lamb JESUS CHRIST, not to judgement, but to the remission of our sins, and as a pledge of eternal beatitude.'

"They could not answer these reasons," continues Theodoric, "and for the future observed the acknowledged ordinance of the Church in the reception of the life-giving mystery."

Theodoric does not tell us who were Margaret's opponents on this occasion. He merely says that with only a few on her side she fought against the maintainers of evil customs for three days, she speaking in her native Saxon, and Malcolm translating her words into Gaelic. In those days there was no archbishop in Scotland, and but few bishops, and the council was not purely ecclesiastical, but a mixed assembly of clergy and laity, and Malcolm and Margaret made no ecclesiastical laws, but merely brought about the observance of the common law of the Church. This she herself distinctly stated and insisted on.\*

About the year 1200 Giraldus wrote: "Non-celebrants may receive often or seldom as their conscience dictates . . . not daily, but at least thrice in the year, at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, or at least at Easter, as is now the custom. And the usage of the Church proves that they should communicate on Holy Thursday (*in Cæna Domini*)."<sup>†</sup>

The constitutions of Alexander de Stavenby, Bishop of Coventry, made in 1237, speak as follows: "As travellers stand in need of nothing so much as food for their journey, let both laymen and clerics be admonished to receive thrice in the year at least the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST, when they are of sufficiently advanced age, viz., on the feast of our LORD's Birth, at Easter, and at Pentecost. And if they are unwilling to do this (so often) let them be admonished to fast in Advent, or at least for half a week, and make a confession before (Christmas); and so also to fast from the Ascension to Pentecost, or at least half a week, and make their confession before (Whit-Sunday)."<sup>‡</sup>

The bishop says nothing here of any compensation for omitting communion at Easter, because the General Council of Lateran in 1215 had made it of strict obligation under pain of personal interdict.

The Bishop of Worcester, Walter de Cantilupe, in 1240 decreed that "the people must confess at least once a year, but should be advised to confess several

\* *Vita*, Theod. *ibid.* cap. 2.

† *Gemma Eccles.* dist. 1, cap. 9.

‡ Wilkins, 1, 640; *Concilia*, ed. Colet, t. XIII, p. 1385.



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times, at least at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost; that cleansed by fasting and confession, they may worthily receive their Saviour.”\*

Robert de Brunne beautifully says:

Commandment in the old law was  
Once in the year to show thy trespass;  
The new law is of more honour  
Once to receive thy Creator.

And he greatly reproaches those who “forget or oversit the time of housel,” and will not give God one night’s lodging in the year.

And thou ne wilt a night’s guest  
Let him harbour in thy house,  
Thou art unkind right marvellous.

An old homily says: “The time of Lent is ordained only to scour and to cleanse your conscience of all manner rust and filth of sin that it is defiled with, so that ye may with a clean conscience, on Easter day, receive the clean Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.”† And Chaucer in the “Persone’s Tale”: “And certes once a year at the least way it is lawful to be houseled, for soothly once a year all things in the earth renovelen.”

The second and third of the precepts of the Church, as given in an old book called *The Ordinarye of Crysten Men*, written in 1467, are these:

“Of all thy sins thou shalt be confessed at the least one time in the year.”  
“And thy Creator thou shalt receive at Easter humbly.”‡

Proof that the Easter Communion had been made could be required, and the neglect punished by process of ecclesiastical law.§

The communion had to be made in the parish church of the communicant, unless a special permission to the contrary had been granted by the parish priest. “Let no one,” says the Constitution of Giles of Bridport, Bishop of Sarum in 1256, “let no one presume on Easter Day to approach the Body of CHRIST, unless he has first confessed and adored the cross. No one is to go to confession or communion out of his parish without permission.”|| “Parish priests must beware,” says the Council of Lambeth in 1281, not to give anyone the Body of the LORD, unless it be first proved by trustworthy evidence that he has confessed. No one must give holy communion to the parishioners of another priest without his explicit leave. But this ordinance does not include travellers, nor cases of necessity.”¶

It was, of course, one of the principal duties of the pastors to prepare their parishioners for this great day, both by instructions and by hearing their confessions. Richard de Marisco, Bishop of Durham in 1220, gives in his synodical constitutions long and very pious instructions regarding the Eucharist,\*\* and does not omit to remind priests how carefully they should instruct the laity:

“As men about to go on a long journey are wont to invite their friends, and

\* Wilkins, 1, 666.

† Lansdowne MS. 392, f. 40, quoted by Hampson in his *Medii Aevi Kalendarium*.

‡ This book is a translation from the French. It was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1502. The five precepts of the Church are given in exactly the same words in *The Book named the Royall*, translated from the French by Caxton. At least they occur on one of the plates in a reprint by Wynkyn de Worde or Pynson. They are evidently taken from the old French rhymes. The 1st is: “On the Sundays thou shalt hear Mass and the feasts of commandment.” The 2nd and 3rd as above; the 4th: “These feasts thou shalt

hallow that be given thee in commandment;” and the 5th: “The four embers, vigils thou shalt fast, and the Lent entirely.” The same are in the Catechism of Laurence Vaux, though in a different order.

§ John Coxhon, accused that he has not received the sacrament of the Eucharist since he has resided in Wylton. He denies the charge and has to clear himself at next session, “cum sexta manu.”—*Depositions, &c., or Record of Judicial Proceedings of Prior and Convent of Durham, 1435–1456*. (Surtees Soc., 1845, p. 36.)

|| Wilkins, 1, 704.

¶ *Ib.* 11, 52, *et alibi*.

\*\* *Ib.* 1, 571–582.

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entertain them at a banquet, so did our LORD JESUS CHRIST, when about to pass from this world to His Father, prepare a feast for His disciples, feeding them truly on His Body and Blood, under the species of bread and wine—the bread having been transubstantiated into the Body, and the wine into the Blood, by the power of God.

“You ought then to communicate at this holy table without any doubt as to the truth of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. For that is received by the mouth which is believed by faith, and to no purpose is Amen answered by those who think differently about what is received. You ought also to instruct laymen, when they communicate, not to admit any doubt of the truth of CHRIST’s Body and Blood. For they receive beyond all question, under the appearance of bread, that which hung for us upon the Cross. They receive that in the chalice which was shed from the side of CHRIST. As Augustine says, ‘The faithful now drink what infidels first shed.’

“The power and virtue and effect of this sacrament is clearly expressed in the words of the LORD: ‘The bread which I give you is my Flesh, for the life of the world: My flesh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed: if anyone eat of My Flesh and drink of My Blood, he shall live for ever.’ But since elsewhere it is said: ‘He that eats the Flesh of the LORD or drinks His Blood unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the LORD,’ this terrible sentence may inspire us with dread. Wherefore, my dear children, listen to the advice of the Apostle: ‘Let every man prove himself’ (cleansing and sanctifying himself by confession), ‘and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that cup.’ And as the children of Israel, eating the lamb, girt their loins, so do you also gird your loins, that is, quench in yourselves all lusts of the flesh, and teach others also to quench them.”

The priests did not fail to give the necessary instructions to their people at this season especially. We have still extant several very interesting sermons preached at the Easter festival, from which I would willingly quote did space permit.\*

[In reference to the Easter sepulchre and the ceremonies which followed, an incident which happened at Salisbury in 1539 seems to deserve notice here. In that year Nicholas Shaxton, the Bishop of the See, wrote to Cromwell† to complain of the doings which took place in his Cathedral on Easter Monday. We may quote the summary of his letter given in Dr James Gairdner’s *Calendar*.

“John Goodall, the vice-bayly, about 3 p.m., seeing the people kneeling and kissing an image of CHRIST, standing on an altar on the north side of the choir, wherein, unknown to him, was the sacrament, told one of the priests to take it away, it being the King’s commandment that no such kissing of images should be suffered, but only creeping to the Cross and kissing it on Good Friday and “Estryn morrow” (i.e., Easter *morning*), which both were passed, for it was 3 p.m. The priest being not over-ready to take it away, and the people fast pressing to kiss it, Goodall commanded his servant to take it down. This was done in obedience to the King’s proclamations, but they interpret it as dishonour to the Sacrament and against the King’s proclamation that all laudable ceremonies should be kept until otherwise ordered. They exaggerate the thing so far that they gather thereof that Goodall has an heretical opinion of the Sacrament, and contemns the King’s proclamation, etc.”

Shaxton defends the action of Goodall, states that he himself had sent for the image but could not obtain possession of it, and finally encloses a communi-

\* See *Old English Homilies* of twelfth century, 2nd series, p. 92 (E. E. T. Soc.), and *The Festival* by John Myrc.

† *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, 1539, Vol. 1, No. 373.



# THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

cation from Goodall. The latter begs Cromwell to consider his services in the extirpation of popishness and idolatry in Sarum and describes the complaint of their Mayor and his brethren as malicious, adding that:

“Thomas Gyndell is most worthy of punishment for his idolatry in kissing the foot of the image in honour of the Sacrament enclosed therein, he being a graduate of the University. The priest also is to be punished for putting It in an image.”

The case is extremely interesting, but also somewhat obscure. We know that, as described above, the Blessed Sacrament was commonly buried in the Easter sepulchre along with the crucifix, after the “creeping to the Cross” on Good Friday—the practice indeed still survives in the Tyrol and other Catholic districts of Germany—and that on Holy Saturday evening, or more commonly “Easter morrow” (morning), the crucifix and the Blessed Sacrament were solemnly carried back to the high altar in token of the Resurrection. For this purpose the Sacred Host was often enclosed in a monstrance representing the figure of CHRIST our LORD, but the details reported by Bishop Shaxton concerning the exposition of this figure throughout Easter Day, and the practice of approaching to kiss the feet while the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in it, are apparently new.]

## CHAPTER VIII. THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

“GOOD men, know well that this is a high feast day and a solemn in all holy Church, and is called the feast of Corpus CHRISTI, i.e., the feast of CHRIST’s Body, the which is each day offered in holy Church on the altar to the high Father of heaven in remission of sin to all that live here in perfect charity, and in great succour and release of their pain that be in purgatory.”

Thus wrote John Myrc in his *Liber Festivalis* in the fourteenth century. This famous solemnity, probably the most popular of all, had then been long established in England. It took its origin in Liège in Belgium, and, like the festival of the Sacred Heart at a later period, was the result of the lifelong prayers and penances of a holy nun, to whom it was made known in visions and revelations that a festival in honour of the Blessed Sacrament was still lacking in the Church. She was of course treated as a visionary and encountered much opposition and persecution, but the final realization of her desire is a sufficient proof to us that her visions came from God.

The history of this feast has been written at great length by many authors. It is enough to say here that in 1246 the celebration of a special feast was ordered in the diocese of Liège by the Bishop, Robert de Torôte, who explained how it might supply the defects of priests and people in the perpetual commemoration in the Mass. He died the same year; and, though the celebration was begun in 1247 by the canons of St Martin’s, yet owing to civil commotions it spread no further for a time. It was, however, approved by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Hugo of St-Cher (famous for his concordance of the Bible) in 1253, and again the next year by Cardinal Peter. But their authority only extended within the bounds of their legation, and was disregarded even there after their departure, except in the church of St Martin.

On August 29, 1261, Urban IV, formerly Archdeacon of Liège, was elected Pope at Viterbo, and, at the request of the Bishop of Liège, confirmed the

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feast for that diocese. Moved by several prodigies which took place about that time, the Pope determined to extend the feast to the whole Church, and he commanded St Thomas and St Bonaventure each to prepare an office. In 1264 he published his Bull. But he died the same year, and troubles prevented the carrying of it out, especially in Italy.

At last, in the Council of Vienne held in 1311 under Clement V, it was decreed that the Bull of Urban IV should be observed. John XXII in 1318 appointed an Octave of the Feast to be kept, and processions to be made.

The King of England, Edward II, had been present at the Council of Vienne, and very shortly after that time we find the observance of the festival promulgated or enforced in the dioceses of England. Thus, on May 21, 1325, the Bishop of Winchester, after reciting the decree of Urban IV, and the more recent one of Clement V, enjoining the feast to be kept on the Thursday after the Octave of Pentecost, and the indulgences granted to its celebration, complains that certain priests neglect to celebrate it, and orders his official to enforce the decrees.\*

Five years earlier the Bishop of Exeter, in a French document addressed to the Prioress of Polslo, ordered “*qe le serviez du corps et du sank notre seigneur JHESU CRIST soit fait de grant solempnité entre vous, chescun an, le Judi prochain après la Trinité et par les oytaves suivantes, si autre feste de plus grant solempnité ne viegne dedans les ditz oytaves.*”†

The author of *The Durham Rites*‡ has left a minute account of the procession in a great cathedral: “The bailiff of the town stood in the Tolbooth and called together all the trades that were established within the town. Every trade in its degree was to bring forth its banners and with them to repair to the abbey church-door. Every banner stood in rank, in its degree, from the abbey church-door to Windishole gate. On the west side of the way stood all the banners, and on the east side all the torches pertaining to the banners.

“In St Nicholas Church was a goodly shrine, called Corpus CHRISTI shrine, appointed to be carried the said day in procession. The shrine was finely gilt, and on the top thereof was a square box of chrystal, wherein was enclosed the holy Sacrament of the altar. It was carried the same day by priests up the Place green, the whole procession of all the churches of the town going before it. And when it was brought a little space within the Windishole gate, it stood still till St Cuthbert’s banner, with two goodly fine crosses, was brought out to meet it; and the prior and convent with the choir in their copes met the said shrine and fell on their knees and prayed. The prior fetched it, and they carrying it forward into the abbey church, the prior and convent with all the choir following, it was set in the choir, and solemn service said before it, and the *Te Deum* solemnly sung and played in the organs, every man praising God; and all the banners of the trades followed the shrine into the church, going round St Cuthbert’s feretory with their torches lighted and burning all the service time. Thence it was conducted with the said procession of the town to its place again. The shrine was carried into the revestry, there to remain till that time twelve months.”§

\* John de Stratford’s *Register*, MS.

† *Monasticon Diœcesis Exoniensis*, Dr Oliver, p. 165.

‡ *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Soc.), p. 89. [See also Canon Fowler’s Edition and notes.]

§ The author, who was an eye-witness of what preceded and followed the Reformation, thus continues: “Afterwards, in the first year of King Edward VI, com-

missioners were appointed to deface all such ornaments in the parish churches at Durham as were left undefaced in a former visitation. The names of the commissioners were Dr Harvey and Dr Whitby. Dr Harvey called for the said shrine, and when it was brought before him, he trode upon it with his feet and broke it into pieces, with many of the ornaments of St Nicholas Church.”



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In the above account it may have been noticed that the ceremonial part of this celebration was not confined to ecclesiastics. Corpus CHRISTI was pre-eminently the people's feast. Trades and guilds took part in the processions. Thus, in Aberdeen, on January 25, 1512, the provost, baillies and council ratified and approved the acts made before, that every craft should have a pair of torches, honestly made of four pounds of wax, to "decure" and worship the Sacrament on Corpus CHRISTI Day, and at the feast of the Pasch, at Yule, and at all other times when need is to the honour of the town.\*

It is evident that with regard to a matter of so public a nature as a civic procession many records will have survived. But, since disorders attract more attention and are more readily chronicled than proceedings which are peaceful and regular, no one should be surprised if, in the midst of much that is edifying, we occasionally meet with evidence of human infirmity; that sometimes the clergy and sometimes the laity have to be exhorted not to grow weary of a pious work which has lost its novelty; that there are disputes between the trades for precedence, questions about right of way; and that even now and then disorders and riot disturb the sacred pomp. It should, however, be added that we only know of such things by the documents which tell of their repression and punishment.† There is, therefore, edification to be found even in such records. Thus in 1419, Philip Repingdon, Bishop of Lincoln, wrote as follows: "The Son of God having descended from the highest heavens for the redemption of mankind, when about to suffer death for us, and to ascend into heaven, left us a magnificent memorial of His surpassing love for us, the precious Sacrament of His Body and His Blood. From the devout veneration of this Body, until we enjoy its beatific vision, we advance in grace and virtue, get pardon of our sins and help to life eternal.

"The beloved inhabitants of our city of Lincoln well knowing these things, and considering the power of this Sacrament to increase devotion and merit, have zealously and fervently kept up a devout custom, that at certain times of the year, viz., on the day of the solemnity of Corpus CHRISTI, and the following Sunday, this precious Sacrament is carried in solemn procession, and with a numerous and devout attendance of priests and clerics, from some church in Wykford in the suburbs of our city to our cathedral church, in order that by the frequent sight of this Sacrament the devotion of the people may be increased, and they may more easily obtain pardon of their sins."

He then complains that some priests, though not otherwise occupied, neglect the procession, to the great danger of their souls and the scandal of others. He reminds them that since priests alone can consecrate this Sacrament, they ought to be especially devout to it, and commands and entreats them in future to assist in surplice. To all those who take part, and pray for the peace and prosperity of the Church and the kingdom of England, he grants forty days' indulgence.‡

It was not merely in cathedral cities that processions were held on this festival. There was probably no town or village or rural church in England

\* Extracts from *Burgh Register* (Spalding Club), I, 442.

† The Corpus CHRISTI procession in London used to pass through a draper's house in the parish of St Mary Abchurch. John Basse, the proprietor, caring more for the damage done by the crowd than for the glory and benefit of our Lord's visit, made armed resistance in 1389. He was fined by the mayor. See *Memorials*

of London from 1276-1419, by H. T. Riley, M.A., p. 509.

‡ Wilkins, III, p. 396. [A very full description of the Corpus CHRISTI Procession at Ipswich as early as 1325 will be found in the Appendix of the Ninth Report of the Histor. MSS. Commission. It was organised by the Merchant Gild dedicated to Corpus CHRISTI.]

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which had not its procession. The will of William Bruges,\* first Garter King-of-Arms, dated 1450, shows that, to enhance the splendour of the procession at Stamford, this pious citizen had had constructed a most rich and elaborate feretory, partly of wood gilt, partly of silver adorned with jewels, which he calls a “solempnitie of array for the fest of Corpus CHRISTI,” and which was to be carried between the deacon and subdeacon. It was surrounded by angels bearing emblems of the Passion. The Blessed Sacrament was placed in a small cup of silver gilt, and this inside a large silver cup. This was covered with a great crown of silver and garnished with stones.

Only a few great churches had such costly furniture, but small items of expense put down by churchwardens in their accounts are equally edifying as witnesses to devotion in humbler places. Thus, in St Mary’s Church, Devizes, in 1499, 6d. (i.e., about six shillings modern value) “for making up [repairing] the canopy on Corpus CHRISTI day”; and again in 1529 “for buckram for the canopy over the sacrament.”† In 1458 Marion Mason, widow, gives a canopy to be placed over the Host, to the church of St Peter of Mancroft, Norwich.‡ In 1489 the churchwardens of St Mary Hill, London, expend 10d. on “garlondes for Corpus CHRISTI day.”

Sometimes garlands were entwined round torches,§ sometimes they were worn by the priests and people, and especially by the members of guilds. Flowers were also mingled with the rushes strewn along the path of the procession. Indeed, long after our LORD had ceased to be carried through the streets or fields, the custom survived in some places of strewing flowers on Corpus CHRISTI day. Brand records|| two examples of this. In North Wales, at Llanasaph, there was a custom of strewing green herbs and flowers at the doors of houses on Corpus CHRISTI Eve. And the Skinners’ Company, which was originally incorporated as the Fraternity of Corpus CHRISTI of Skinners, and held a solemn procession in London on the festival of Corpus CHRISTI, after the suppression of that festival and of all honour paid to the Blessed Sacrament, still continued on the old day to walk in procession from their hall on Dowgate Hill to the church of St Antholin in Watling Street, attended by a number of boys, whom they supported in Christ’s Hospital school, and of girls; and though they carried nothing and followed nothing better than themselves, the old honour intended for our LORD was continued, and the children strewed herbs before them as they walked, only knowing that this was an ancient custom.

There have been stranger and less innocent perversions of the old joyous procession than this. Mr Davies, who has collected a minute account of the celebration of this festival in York during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, says: “It was, unquestionably, with the utmost reluctance, and after a protracted struggle, that the citizens of York were ultimately constrained to relinquish their celebration of the Corpus CHRISTI festival, which during nearly three centuries they had regarded as the great holiday of the year, the day on which their ‘pageants of delight were played.’”¶

“As the Corpus CHRISTI pageants were gradually discontinued other spectacles and diversions were provided for the entertainment of the citizens.”\*\*

\* Peck’s *Antiquarian Annals of Stamford*, Book xiv, p. 24.

† *Wiltshire Archæological Mag.* vol. II, p. 252.

‡ Blomefield’s *History of Norfolk*, IV, 213.

§ Rock, II, 425.

|| *Popular Antiquities*, I, 297.

¶ *Records of York*, by Robert Davies, F.S.A., p. 278.

[The literature dealing with the mystery-plays and pageants of early England has naturally been very much enlarged since Fr Bridgett wrote. It will be sufficient to refer to Mr Chambers’ great work on *The Mediæval Stage* and to Mr A. W. Pollard’s *English Miracle Plays*, now in its fourth edition.]

\*\* *Ib.* p. 273.



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"The diversion of bear-baiting was occasionally authorized by the lord mayor and his council, who countenanced the cruel sport by their presence." Alas! poor Christian people of York! Surely if the "fantastic tricks" of men in power ever "made the angels weep," it was when the Sacrament of Love was taken from you, and you were invited to bear-baiting instead! To the honour of the good citizens of York Mr Davies adds: "But none of these entertainments appear to have afforded the same gratification, and to have been undertaken with the same alacrity, as the Corpus CHRISTI pageants for which they were substituted. A degree of coercion was sometimes necessary to induce the citizens to take their allotted part in the processions."\*

I will add an extract from *The History of Guernsey*.† Mr Berry has related how, in Catholic times, "before the ceremony (the Corpus CHRISTI procession) took place, it was customary for the seneschal, vavasors and all the members of the royal court of justice, attended by the king's officers, to make a survey of the roads throughout the island, to see that they were in proper repair for the procession, etc. When popery declined," he says, "and the perambulation of the Host was suppressed, those surveys became less frequent." At the time the author wrote, i.e., in 1814, they had been revived, and he continues thus; the rabble who join the procession of the officers "have the privilege of saluting or rather insulting every female they meet without distinction, so that a dirty carman may now exultingly boast of having pressed the lips of some colonel's lady!"

Is this then the worship in spirit and in truth which was promised when the old Catholic ceremonies were abolished? In 1527 Æcolampadius found especial fault with the pomp of Corpus CHRISTI. Bishop Fisher could not deny that there were some abuses in the popular gathering, "but," he added, "the institution of public processions is in itself excellent. By such spectacles, the rude people seeing the honour given by the higher classes to the Holy Eucharist, is more easily moved to piety. And on account of the weak (who would be offended if their old customs were interfered with) we must tolerate much (which we cannot altogether approve).‡" The good bishop would have used a less apologetic tone could he have foreseen what would take the place in England of those religious amusements in which the people then delighted. When he speaks of tolerating or conniving, his allusion is not to the processions which were ordered by the Pope and Bishops, but to the pageantry which in many places followed or even encroached upon them.

Many modern writers have illustrated from a literary or social point of view the Mysteries and Miracle-plays of the Middle Ages, which were the rude beginnings of our drama. I shall confine my few remarks to their religious aspect, and even as much as possible to their connexion with the festival of Corpus CHRISTI.

Before this festival was promulgated by the Council of Vienne, Robert de Brunne had turned into English rhymes the *Manuel des Péchés*, composed in French by another Englishman, William de Waddington.§ Speaking of the duties of pastors, he says:

It is forbid him in the decree—Miracles for to make or see,—For miracles if thou begin—It is a gathering of sin.—He may in the church, through his reason,—Play the resurrection,—That is

\* *Ib.* p. 277. The "pageants" were not simply the religious ceremonies, but the mystery-plays to be mentioned presently. These also were religious.

† Berry's *History of Guernsey* (1814), pp. 129, 130.

‡ "Nam id genus spectaculis, in quibus honor a

proceribus impenditur eucharistiæ, rude vulgus ad pietatem facilius trahi solet. Et certe propter infirmiores ad multa connivendum est."—*De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis Christi*, lib. 1, cap. 22.

§ Robert de Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* was written

in 1303.

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to say, how GOD rose—GOD and man in might and los (i.e., praise)—To make men in the belier good—That He has rose with flesh and blood;—And he may play, withouten plight (i.e., guilt)—How GOD was born in Yole night.—If thou do it in ways or graves,—A sight of sin truly it seems.

The French original here has:

Mais fere folcs assemblez—En les rues des cités—Ou en cymiters apres mangiers.

The danger then, was not in a religious play acted under the superintendence of the priest in the church, but in plays performed on fixed or movable stages in streets and churchyards, especially after eating and drinking, when the assembly was likely to become riotous, and the acting to degenerate into buffoonery. But even when acted in church,

If a priest or clerk lend vestment—That hallowed is through sacrament,—More than other they are to blame;—Of sacrilege they have the fame.

There exists a common impression at the present day that the medieval Church encouraged sports and merriment among the people, and to some extent this is true. But abuse pressed so closely on the heels of use, that it is easier to collect many passages from old writers condemning such sports in the severest manner than to find even a few which give them direct encouragement. The whole tone of Robert de Brunne's book shows that he was a man of good sense, with good love of the people, and he wrote in hopes that his book might be read aloud and give instruction and amusement at the same time. His opinion as an eyewitness of many popular amusements was as follows:

Dances, carols, summer games,—Of many such come many shames.—What see ye by every minstrel—That in such things delight them all?—Their doing is full perilous;—It loveth neither God, nor God's house.

But as people must have sport and recreation, wise men taught them to turn from the dances and summer games, not only by ceremonial strictly religious, but by pageants in harmony with such ceremonial. The Chester and Coventry plays are well known, and may be here passed by. In Stamford, "the play of Corpus CHRISTI was acted upon Corpus CHRISTI day in the north chancel of the Church of St Mary's at the bridge, called Corpus CHRISTI Chapel, and elsewhere in the town."\* There, as in many other places, was a Corpus CHRISTI guild, whose duties, however, were probably rather connected with the procession which preceded the plays than with the pageants which were under the management of the trades. So at least it was in York, of which city's devotion, through the diligence of Mr Davies, we possess the most detailed knowledge. The plays had been acted yearly since the middle of the fourteenth century, whereas the guild commenced only in the year 1408. It was very popular, and persons of the highest rank, both ecclesiastical and secular, were enrolled among its members. Their office was, on this festival, to take part in and to arrange and watch over, the religious ceremonial outside the church. Mr Davies thus describes the procession:

"On the morrow of Corpus CHRISTI day, the persons who were to join in the procession assembled at the great gates of the Priory of the Holy Trinity in Micklegate. The parochial clergy of the city in their surplices walked first. The Master of the Guild, invested with a silken cope, appeared as *presidens principalis*. He was supported on either side by one of the clergy who had previously filled the same office, and was attended by the six keepers of the guild, with silk stoles round their necks, and white wands in their hands. The

\* Peck's *History of Stamford*, Book xiv, pp. 6, 7.



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costly shrine of silver gilt and decorated with a profusion of jewels inclosing a vase of beryl in which the sacred elements were deposited, was borne in the midst by the chaplains of the guild. It was the duty of two of the keepers of the guild to attend diligently upon the shrine, whilst the others took care that strict order and decorum were observed. Singers attended to chaunt the proper services of the day, in which such of the clergy as were able to sing were required to join, and the procession was accompanied with the usual display of crosses, tapers, banners, and torches. After the ecclesiastics came the lord mayor, aldermen and other members of the Corporation in their robes of Ceremony, attended by the city officers, and other persons bearing their appropriate number of lighted torches, and followed by the officers and members of the numerous crafts or trade-companies of the city with their banners and torches, taking their places according to a prescribed order of precedence. In the streets through which the procession passed, a prodigious crowd of the populace was assembled; the fronts of the houses were decorated with tapestry and other hangings, and their entrances strewn with rushes and flowers. From the priory gates they took their course to the cathedral, where a sermon was preached in the chapter-house. Thence they went to the Hospital of St Leonard, where the Holy Sacrament was left."

It will be seen from this passage that in York the procession took place on Friday, not on the feast itself. This was to some extent an abuse, yet it came from an attempt to remedy an evil. Both the procession and the pageants had formerly been appointed for Thursday, the feast of Corpus CHRISTI. But a great multitude of strangers used to be attracted to York, and of course in the multitude were the riotous and sensual as well as the devout. Disorders were of frequent occurrence at the beginning of the fifteenth century. At length in 1426, "a certain very religious person, one William Melton, a brother of the order of Friars Minor, professor of holy pageantry, and a most famous preacher of the Word of GOD, coming to the city, had in several sermons recommended the Corpus CHRISTI play to the people, affirming that it was good in itself and highly praiseworthy; yet he said that the citizens and others, strangers visiting the city at the festival, not for the play alone, joined in revellings, clamours, singing, and other improprieties, little regarding the divine offices of the day; and it was to be lamented that they consequently lost the benefit of the indulgences graciously conceded by Pope Urban IV to those who duly attended the religious services." The City Council, by his advice, decreed that the plays should be performed in future on the Wednesday. But long-established custom prevailed. The trades still persisted in exhibiting their pageants on the day of the festival, and Friar Melton's advice only prevailed to this extent, that the two celebrations took place on different days, and the religious procession was deferred to the Friday.

The play consisted of representations of a whole series of scriptural subjects, with appropriate costume. It is supposed, says Mr Davies, that the pageants were little more than *tableaux vivants*, or what Dr Percy describes, a kind of dumb show intermingled with a few short speeches. They were performed in at least twelve different parts of the city. The Corpus CHRISTI Guild had, however, a special and more elaborate play of its own, called the Credo play, which had been bequeathed to it by William Revetor, a chantry priest, on condition that it should be publicly performed at least every tenth year.

In connexion with this subject it may be mentioned that there exists in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, a manuscript called *The Play of the Sacra-*

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ment, written about 1461. Dr Whitley Stokes, who has published it for the Philological Society, says it is "the earliest dramatic poem in the language of which the characters are not allegorical, and which is founded neither on a biblical narrative nor on the life of a saint."\* It is the history of an outrage done by some Jews to the sacred Host, and of the miracles which led to their conversion. The Jews go to confession apparently before they are baptized. But so, apparently, did some mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Confession is useful even when not sacramental.

Thus in our lawe they wer made stedfast;  
The holy Sacrement sheuyd them grette faveur,  
In contrycyon thyr hertis wer cast,  
And went and shewyd their lyves to a confesour.

This review of the popular devotions of our forefathers may be fitly, if somewhat sadly, concluded by the words of the late Canon Oakeley, who laboured so successfully to revive the pomp of ritual, first as a minister of the Church of England, and afterwards for thirty years as a priest of the Catholic Church.

Still find we, up and down  
In country or in town,  
The footprints of our fathers' holier tread;  
A relic here and there,  
A pageant, or a fair,  
And old traditions floating round the dead.

But substance have they none,  
For CHRIST, their Light, is gone;  
And they but as the ghosts of blessings bide;  
Of inward sense bereft,  
The husks alone are left;  
No saving import theirs, no heavenward side.

O foolish, foolish World!  
How madly hast thou hurl'd  
Thy loving Saviour from His earthly throne,  
Hoping to do Him spite!  
Whereas thy fatal might  
Hath wreak'd its vengeance on thyself alone.†

## CHAPTER IX. INTERDICTS

THE subject of the present chapter is connected with that of the last by way of contrast. A festival adds unusual splendour to divine worship; an interdict casts the gloom of spiritual privation over even ordinary days.

The Church was sent by our LORD in His own place to carry peace and joy to the world; but at the same time she was bidden to shake the dust off the soles of her feet as a testimony against those who should reject her. Her primary desire is to dispense to all the spiritual goods entrusted to her care; but she has been warned not to cast her pearls before swine, nor to give what is holy to dogs. Even towards her own children she must sometimes act with apparent rigour for their good, since a mother should not only feed and fondle and exhort—she must sometimes show that she is displeased, reprove, rebuke and chastise. Hence the Church's power of inflicting censures, by which she deprives her perverse children, with a view to their ultimate amendment, of certain of

\* *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1860-1, be found fully dealt with in Mr Pollard's *English* p. 104. [This has also been printed elsewhere, and will *Miracle Plays*.]

† *Lyra Liturgica*, "Corpus CHRISTI," p. 152.



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the spiritual goods over which she has jurisdiction. This power was most clearly committed to her by JESUS CHRIST,\* and has been exercised from the days of the Apostles to the present.

Censures are of three kinds—excommunications, suspensions and interdicts. Most persons possess some general knowledge of the two former. They remember St Paul's question to the Corinthians as to whether they wished him to come to them with a rod or in charity, and how he bade them solemnly, by his authority and in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, deliver the incestuous man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order to put away the evil leaven from among them;† and how he delivered Hymenæus and Alexander to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme.‡ It is also easily understood that the priest should be removed from a charge to which he is unfaithful, or forbidden to perform acts of which he is unworthy. But an interdict, as the word is understood by the Church, is a less familiar mode of coercion and requires a few words of explanation. It differs from an excommunication especially in this, that an excommunication (as the word implies) separates the guilty person from communion with others, and so indirectly deprives him of the use of certain spiritual goods; whereas the interdict deprives him directly of the use of some of these, leaving him, however, in full communion with his fellow Christians in all civil intercourse, and in the use of all spiritual goods not specially forbidden. An interdict may also include the innocent together with the guilty, for though it is never imposed except for guilt, the innocent may be justly called on to repair an outrage or to humble themselves for the crimes of those with whom they associate. Interdicts are local or personal, general or particular. These words explain themselves or will be made clear by the examples which I am about to give.

The first is one laid on a private person. It appears from the Register of William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, that in 1468 a quarrel arose between Robert Peverell, rector of Drokenesford, and one of his parishioners, named John Champney, about tithes. When the matter was at last brought into the bishop's court and John was legally cited to appear, he contumaciously refused to come. Thereupon he was interdicted by the court from entering his parish church. But pride and obstinacy got the better of him, and, moved by evil counsellors, he appeared publicly in the midst of the solemnities of Corpus CHRISTI. The office was immediately interrupted, and the priest having brought his conduct once more before the bishop, Champney and his partisans were excommunicated.§ Here the milder form of remedy first applied proved ineffectual, and the Church had to treat the hardened offender as a heathen and a publican.

For a great offence committed in a sacred place, or committed by many of those who frequent it, a ban is sometimes laid on the place itself, and the celebration of divine offices and ministration of sacraments are suspended, not only as regards the guilty persons, but the whole community; that the good may urge on the guilty to do penance, and may unite with them in making satisfaction. This is what is called a local interdict.

In a Welsh charter, of about A.D. 1070, the cause and manner of a local interdict are given. The family of Cadwgan, son of Meurig, King of Glamorgan, had gone to Llandaff for the Christmas festivals, with good intentions, but, as the charter quaintly puts it, "as Aaron's rod had been transformed into a dragon, so excessive feasting had transformed these men from pious worship-

\* Matt. xvi, 18.

† 1 Cor. iv 21, v 3-13.

‡ 1 Tim. i, 20.

§ Waynflete's Register (MS.), fol. 95, tom. 1.

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pers into brawlers and murderers." They had slain Berthute, the nephew of the Bishop, a holy man and the physician of the whole country around. Bishop Herwald immediately summoned a synod of his clergy, and a solemn interdict was pronounced. The crosses and relics were taken from the altars and laid on the ground, the bells were reversed, the doors of the churches were blocked with thorns, and no service was permitted either day or night. The royal household was excommunicated. The effect of these measures on the whole country was so great that the king with tears asked for pardon and reconciliation for his household. Having received penance and absolution, he laid his hand on the altar of St Peter and the holy confessors, Dubricius, Telau and Oudoceus, and made a solemn offering of land to God, His saints and the church of Llandaff.\*

A far more terrible outrage occurred in the city of Norwich in the year 1272. It is without parallel in its enormity in English Catholic history; but it deserves to be known, as revealing not merely the wild passions which occasionally burst out, but the appeal to faith by which they were met and expiated.

It is not possible at the present day to ascertain with certainty the origin of the outrage, or the degrees of guilt of the parties in the disputes from which it arose; for though several accounts have been preserved, and two or three of these are the detailed narratives of eyewitnesses, yet they are written with evident partisanship on different sides. With regard, however, to the facts of the interdict itself by which the outrages were punished, there is more agreement, and we have several official documents.†

One thing is certain. There was a long and violent feud between the citizens and the prior of Norwich, William de Brunham. Blomefield quotes an old roll from which it appears that during a fair held on Trinity Sunday, 1272, near the monastery gates, a contention arose between the prior's men and the men of the town, so that many of the townsmen were killed in the fray; wherefore the coroners of the city took an inquest, and found the prior's men guilty, and made out a precept to take them, if they came within the liberty of the town; and not long after two were taken in the city liberties. For this inquest, continues the account, the prior got (some of) the citizens excommunicated, pretending it a breach of his privileges,‡ which increased the malice between them till August, so that the prior's men shut up their gates, and hung out over them scutcheons, targets, bucklers and crossbows, with which they wounded many that went by; and the Sunday before St Lawrence they came out by night armed, robbed a merchant, and broke open a tavern. The citizens congregated and repelled violence by violence; and one account says that the prior, seeing the great excitement and fearing an attack, sent to Great Yarmouth and brought thence a mob of malefactors or *roughs*, whom he armed and placed in the belfry, fortifying it as a castle.

Bartholomew, the monk of Norwich, admits that many serious charges were made by the citizens against the prior, and he indignantly protests that he was innocent of them all. But from the fact that the prior was imprisoned by

\* Haddan and Stubbs, 1, 296.

† The event is related by Matthew Paris, as well as by Hemingford, Trivet, and Matthew of Westminster. A much fuller account is found in the *Historia Anglicana* of Bartholomew Cotton, a monk of Norwich, and an eyewitness. This part of his work was printed by Wharton in the *Anglia Sacra*, 1, 399; and more accurately in the Rolls Series. The editor of this edition adds an important letter of Pope Gregory X. In 1831 another account, giving a different

colour to the dispute of the prior and citizens, was published in Bently's *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 252-259, with some official documents. This account was not known to Blomefield, the historian of Norfolk; nor was the Pope's letter known to the editor of the *Excerpta*.

‡ Other accounts say that the prior's men fled for refuge into the church of St Ethelbert in the abbey precincts, and that their pursuers had violated the sanctuary.



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the king, it would seem that another view was taken by the judges. It is not easy to credit the statement of Bartholomew that the whole of the forty judges or jurymen were bribed by the citizens to give false judgement. And, on the other hand, the fact of the prior's imprisonment entirely disproves the otherwise incredible accusation made against the Bishop of Norwich by a partisan of the city, that he excommunicated all who should take part with the citizens during the trial, and that out of fear of this excommunication the king himself would not grant any pardon to the citizens who were condemned to death.

Putting aside then these unlikely charges on both sides, it would seem that there must have been some great provocation given to the citizens before they could act as they did. In their defence they alleged that when they saw the Yarmouth mob and the prior's men making a castle of the monastery contrary to the king's peace, they thought themselves bound to demolish it, and bring the culprits to justice.

When the investigation was made the king took a very different view of these defenders of peace and justice, and calls them "sons of blasphemy, reckless of their souls."\*

An attack then was made upon the monastery, not by a mob, but by the citizens summoned to the work by the bailiffs and council of the city, and instigated by certain priests and clerics who sided with the citizens against the monks. According to Bartholomew, they bound themselves by oath to the total destruction of the monastery. On August 11 the tocsin was rung, and criers summoned all the citizens above twelve years old to the attack.

Unable to force the outside gates, the citizens set fire to them and burnt also the parish church in the precincts with all its contents. They also burnt down the almshouse, the gates of the cathedral and the great bell-tower, the chapel of our Lady, the dormitory, refectory, guest-house and infirmary, with its chapel. The Pope mentions especially that "the sacrament of the altar, kept with great veneration in divers places," was consumed, together with relics, vestments, and many precious books and ornaments. The mob also slew many of the servants, some subdeacons, clerks and laymen, both inside and outside the monastery; others they imprisoned. Some of the monks were cruelly beaten and subjected to other indignities, and all but two or three were driven from the monastery. The sacred vessels, books, gold and silver, which were not burnt, fell into the hands of the sacrilegious robbers.

When Henry III heard of this outrage he ordered all the seaports to be watched, that none of the perpetrators might escape, and summoned a parliament for the feast of St Giles at Bury St Edmund's, to give counsel how to treat such malefactors. In the meantime, the Bishop of Norwich, Roger Skirving, held a synod on the feast of the decollation of St John Baptist (August 29), and after canonical warnings, and summoning the corporation in vain to make satisfaction, he excommunicated some of them by name, and all participators in general, and put the city of Norwich under interdict, excommunicating also all who should carry victuals to its citizens. By the advice of the barons and bishops, the king went himself to Norwich on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14), and the bishop, at the king's demand, relaxed the interdict while the king was in the city. The judges, having tried the malefactors, ordered about thirty of them to be drawn by horses to the gallows and

\* Dissensions between monasteries and cities, leading to acts of great violence, were by no means infrequent in the fourteenth century, owing to questions of jurisdiction and privilege. Mr Noake, in *Monastery and Cathe-*

*dral of Worcester*, pp. 96-101, relates an attack by the townspeople on that monastery in 1349, and refers to another still more serious at Bury in 1327, and to a third at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, in the fifteenth century.

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their bodies to be hanged and then burnt. The citizens, on the other hand, though they could not deny the attack on the monastery and the murders, affirmed that the fire which had consumed the buildings was simply the result of accident. They also made many charges against the prior. The king sequestered the manors of the monastery, and the prior was first imprisoned in the custody of the bishop, and then resigned. On the election of a new prior the manors were restored. On the feast of St Luke (October 18) the interdict was renewed, but relaxed from the vigil of Christmas to the day after the Epiphany; and once more, at the election of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwarby, it was suspended until the octave of Easter.

In the meantime the whole affair was reported to the Holy See, not merely by the monks, but by letters from the bishops; and Pope Gregory X, considering the unexampled enormity of the offence, wrote to the Bishops of London and Ely a letter such as, according to the chronicler, had never before been received in England, so strong was its language and terrible the measures it prescribed. The Pope confirmed all the censures passed against the criminals, and ordered them to be published in all the cathedral churches throughout England, that those who had been excommunicated might be avoided. Their absolution was reserved to the Pope; and even if they were absolved by others in danger of death, their bodies could not receive ecclesiastical burial. They were deprived of any benefices or fiefs they might hold from the Church, and any rights of patronage they might have; and their descendants even to the fourth generation were made incapable of admission to any clerical body, or to any position of honour in a monastery, without apostolic dispensation. Should the citizens of Norwich contumaciously disregard the censures for four months, the bishops were then to see that none of the neighbouring cities of England should have any dealings with them, under pain of interdict and excommunication; the payment of all debts due to them was to be suspended; and finally the secular power was to be invoked, according to the custom introduced in England by the devotion of the faithful against such as persist in a state of excommunication beyond a certain time. All ecclesiastics, secular and regular, were at once to leave the city, except a few appointed to baptize children and give communion to the dying. Lastly, the bailiffs and councilmen were summoned to appear personally at Rome, and the corporation by procurators.

Owing to the appeals of the citizens to Rome and other causes, two more years elapsed before peace was perfectly restored. By common consent of the monks and the citizens, and permission of the Holy See, the new king, Edward I, was made arbitrator. The monks demanded 4,000 marks compensation for injury done to their property. The citizens offered 2,000. The king ordered 3,000 to be paid in yearly instalments of 500, and that there should be mutual forgiveness of wrongs. As a solemn act of reparation for the insults offered during the riot to our LORD JESUS CHRIST in the Blessed Sacrament, the young king made another ordinance: "We decree and ordain that the corporation shall have made a golden vessel, ten pounds' weight of gold and value of one hundred pounds' weight of silver, to hold the Body of CHRIST above the altar of the church."

The interdict was finally removed on November 14, 1275, after having lasted more than three years.

We now turn to the famous interdict to which the whole of England was subjected by Pope Innocent III on account of the refusal of King John to accept Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury. The reasons of this



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interdict belong to political history and need not be discussed here.\* But as the nature of it belongs to the present subject, and is frequently misunderstood and exaggerated by historians, it may be well to supply a few historical details which will help us to realize one of the most striking events in our history—the cessation among a Catholic people for more than six years of the fullness of Catholic rites and worship. The interdict was published on March 23, 1208, and ceased on July 2, 1214.†

J. R. Green says: “All worship save that of a few privileged Orders, all administration of the sacraments save that of private baptism, ceased over the length and breadth of the country; the church-bells were silent, the dead lay unburied on the ground.” There are several inaccuracies in this description. Dr Lingard, with his usual precision, writes: “The appointed day came, and instantly the churches were closed; no bell was tolled; no service was solemnly performed; the administration of the sacraments, except to infants and the dying, was suspended, and the bodies of the dead were interred silently and in unconsecrated ground.” He adds in a note: “Sermons were preached on the Sundays in the churchyards: marriages and churchings took place in the porch of the church.”

Before completing this picture, the outline of which is correct, it is well to remark that the extent of the cessation of the divine rights during an interdict depends on the will of the lawgiver, and has been modified from time to time, as was judged expedient. The prescriptions of Innocent III cannot therefore be accurately ascertained by inspection of the canon law in the nineteenth or even in the sixteenth century.

At a period later than that of Innocent III ‡ baptism could be solemnly given even in the church as well as confirmation; the sacrament of penance was freely administered to all who asked for it; the Holy Eucharist could be carried with solemnity to the dying, and could be received by monks and nuns who had the privilege to assist at Mass. Mass could be celebrated once a week in each church, though with closed doors and without the ringing of bells, and with the exclusion of the laity as well as of all persons excommunicated or specially interdicted or who had given occasion to the interdict; and burial in consecrated ground was granted to ecclesiastics. Above all an interdict was always suspended on the feasts of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the Assumption, and during the whole octave of Corpus CHRISTI. On these days Mass and Office were said and sung with the usual solemnity. But several of these concessions were quite unknown in the great interdict of 1208.

Already in 1207, on account of the tyranny of the king and his treatment of his half-brother, Geoffrey Plantagenet, Archbishop of York, the Pope had threatened to put the northern province under interdict, “not permitting in it any divine office except the baptism of children and penances for the dying to be celebrated.”§ As the king, however, continued, like Herod, “to stretch forth his hand to afflict some of the Church” (Acts xii, 1), driving the monks from Canterbury, seizing their possessions and refusing to receive Cardinal Langton as archbishop, not only the province of York but the whole

\* They are well treated in an article in the *Month*, April, 1879.

† *The Margan and Dunstable Annals*, and the *Annales Cambriæ*, say March 23, which was Passion Sunday in 1208. *Winchester, Tewkesbury*, and *Waverley* say Monday, 24. It was probably published on Sunday and began on Monday. As to

the *Solutio*, Wendover says June 29, 1214; the *Dunstable Annals* say July 3; the rest are unanimous as to July 2.

‡ See Suarez, *De Censuris*, Disput. 32, 34, 35; S. Alph. *Theol. Moral. de Censuris*, cap. 4.

§ See *Regist. Innoc. III.* lib. xi, ep. 87; Migne, tom. ccxv, col. 1404.

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of England was interdicted. Martene has published, from a manuscript of St Michael's Mount in Normandy, the prescriptions of this interdict.\*

The clergy could celebrate, in small groups in the churches, the various hours of the Divine Office,† without any solemnity or singing, and could read the Gospel; but with closed doors, allowing no layman to enter even for private prayer, unless it were some person of great rank, not excommunicated, who should with great devotion beg to be allowed to enter the church, and who could not be refused without grave danger. In that case such a person might enter alone, but he should hear nothing from the clergy, except words of exhortation "to obey God rather than man," or others of the like kind. The priests were to call together their parishioners every Sunday and at the principal feasts around a cross in the town or churchyard, and there preach to them patience and obedience, setting before them the example of JESUS CHRIST, obedient to death, teaching them to obey God rather than man, and not to fear those that can kill the body but can do no more. At the end of the sermon the priests were to say prayers for the peace of the Church, for the king, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST would direct his feet into the way of salvation, and give to him the spirit of counsel, etc. They were to say also prayers for the living and the dead, all kneeling, and to exhort the people to persist in such prayers day and night, so as to supply for the loss of Masses by vigils and prayers; assuring them that those who were obedient to the Church were following the way of salvation, while those who were rebellious might fear the vengeance of God, since the child is cursed who when his mother chastises him strikes her with his fist. The priests were to publish the festivals, but not to bless bread nor water. This refers to the bread usually distributed at the end of Mass, for blessing and grace were not prohibited at table. Nevertheless blessed bread and water were distributed after the sermon, according to the *Dunstable Annals*, a concession to this effect having been made by the Pope.

Infants were to be baptized at home with the usual anointings and with all due solemnity. The archdeacons and deans were to assemble on Holy Thursday to receive instructions, and the old chrism was to be preserved. (In general the holy oils are renewed on that day, but in answer to a consultation of the bishops the Pope had decided that no new oil should be consecrated, and that the old should still be used, and, if need were, mixed with unconsecrated oil.‡)

The baptismal water and vessels were to be carried from house to house.§ Whoever should ask for confession should have it whenever he wished, but without the Eucharist and without extreme unction. As to this last privation, the Pope replied to the bishops in May 1208, that though the Viaticum, as a general rule, might be understood as included under the clause "penances of the dying," yet in this case it was not included, and the rule of St Augustine might now be applied: *Crede et manducasti*; in other words, that the dying should make spiritual communions, and could do so fruitfully, being deprived of the sacramental communion not by neglect or contempt of it, but by necessity. The necessity would, he hoped, be of short duration.|| In 1212, as the necessity was prolonged, the Pope relaxed this rigorous prohibition.

The bodies of the dead, whether clerics or lay, might be laid by their friends

\* *Thesaur. Anecd.* i, 810; also Migne, tom. ccxvii, col. 190.

† The Office, *i.e.*, the Psalms, Lessons, etc., of the Breviary, not the Mass. ‡ *Reg. Inn.* III, lib. xi, ep. 102.

§ It appears, however, that in reality the baptisms took place in the churches: "Sacerdotes in ecclesiis

baptizabant . . . et offerre volentibus accessum ad altaria concedebant." (*Ann. de Duns.* p. 30, ed. Ro s.) Suarez says that in the time of interdict baptism may and should be administered solemnly in the church.

This was contrary to the Pope's first intention.

|| *Regist.* lib. xi, ep. 102.



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wherever they might choose outside the churchyards, especially where the passers-by might be moved by the sight, but no priest could be present at the burial. The priest might, while the body lay in the house, make privately a commendation of the soul, without cross or holy water. The bodies of the clergy might be placed in sealed coffins or in lead, and laid in the trees of the churchyards, or on the walls; and the bodies of religious within their cloisters, but without opening the soil of the cemeteries. This was so strictly carried out that bishops who died during the interdict remained unburied.\*

The altars in the churches were to be stripped. Espousals and marriages were not to be contracted. The *Annals of Dunstable*, however, mention that espousals † and churchings took place in the porch of the church.

There are several other prescriptions in this document concerning schools, the Hospitallers, the privilege of sanctuary, and the violation of church property; and then we come to the following: "Those who might have received the Body of the LORD, and who were ordered to receive it, and who scorned to do so, may not eat flesh meat on Easter Day or afterwards without the permission of the bishop or of some authorized official." As the interdict was published on Passion Sunday, it was probably ordered that the Easter Communion should be anticipated that year, and this was the penalty against wilful neglect.

Lastly, it was decreed that "wherever the Body of the LORD, after the publication of the interdict, should remain unconsumed (*residuum fuerit*), it should be honourably kept in the church, until orders should be given as to what should be done with it; but that it should be received by none, not even by a priest."

In a letter to the Bishops of Ely and London, who had published the interdict, Innocent wrote on June 14, 1208, that he should not have been sorry had they allowed the religious orders to make use of their privilege, by which they were entitled in times of interdict to say Mass with doors closed, etc., "especially because by the oblation of the saving Victim the Divine Majesty might be appeased in this great necessity."‡

It appears that this declaration of the Sovereign Pontiff was soon known; for on August 22 the Pope writes again that he has heard that at first all the Cistercians observed the restrictions of the interdict most rigorously, but that soon some of their own authority, and others after a time at the command of their abbot, had begun to say Mass, though some still persisted in their observance. The reasons of this had been that some considered themselves not comprised in the general terms of the interdict, the privileges requiring a special mention of them to be made. The Pope, without blaming them, gives the bishops power to decide whether this partial nonobservance of the interdict is likely to cause scandal, or to make the king think that the Pope will relent if he persists in his contumacy. Should this be the case, the bishops are to restrain once the liberty claimed by these religious.§ However, in January 1209, at the request of Cardinal Langton, permission was granted to all conventual churches, which had hitherto been obedient, to say Mass once a week secretly, "that the virtue of this most divine Sacrament may obtain a good end to this business."|| Permission was also granted to Cardinal Langton and the three bishops of London, Ely and Worcester, should they be summoned to England

\* *Gesta Innoc.*, Migne, tom. ccxiv.

† Dr Lingard says "marriages," but the *Annals of Dunstable*, to which he refers, only say *sponsalia*. These according to Suarez, were lawful, but not marriages, though, as the interdict was prolonged beyond the expectation of the Pope, a concession on

such a point was very probably granted later on.

‡ *Reg.* l. xi, ep. 102. § *Reg.* l. xi, ep. 141.

|| *Ib.* ep. 214. Matthew Paris says that the white monks, *i.e.* the Cistercians, did not enjoy this privilege, because they had not obeyed from the beginning. I think he is mistaken. They asked for greater favours.

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by the king, to have Mass said for themselves and their household wherever they should pass.\*

The Cistercians were not satisfied with this general concession, and petitioned the Pope for an extension. They pleaded their privileges, their immemorial custom, and, above all, that their houses were in solitary places, so that they might keep choir without scandal to others; and that by celebration of Mass they might draw down greater grace on the king and country. They also alleged the danger to their religious spirit if their usual practices were longer intermitted. The Pope replied that he had carefully weighed, with the cardinals, all that they alleged, and the reasons for and against his granting their petition. He loved and even venerated them, but he did not think it right to yield. There were reasons of prudence, lest jealousy should be excited in the other Orders or among the clergy; and there were special reasons why he should maintain great severity on this occasion. No ordinary battle would conquer such a king as John, and he must not be allowed to harden himself by any hope of the Pope's yielding. As to the decay of discipline in the Order, they must provide against it by other means; but in any case the danger of a part could not weigh against the danger of the whole. He comes at last to the argument which they had evidently borrowed from his former letter, and thus replies to it: "Although you very piously believe that the immolation of the saving Victim will bring about more speedily the desired ending to this business, yet we hope that if you bear patiently this undeserved pain, the 'Spirit who asketh for you with unspeakable groanings,' will all the more quickly obtain a happy issue from Him, who by bearing a pain not due, and by paying what He had not taken, hath redeemed us, even our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Wherefore we pray and beseech you, beloved sons, that remembering that this affair is now almost at its end, you will not disturb its progress, but that you will well weigh what we have written for God's sake and for ours, who with a most fervent charity are zealous for you and your Order, and who hold it in veneration; and that bearing your present troubles in patience you will give yourselves to prayer to God that He would so soften the author of this guilt as to absolve those who bear his pain; and be certain that, for the undeserved pain you bear, a worthy recompense is in store for you, not only from God but from us also."† This letter was written on March 6, 1209; and on the same day another was addressed to the bishops who had promulgated the interdict, instructing them so to temper the rigour of ecclesiastical discipline for these good monks, that the cord should not be broken. Discipline is compared to a cord (*neruo*) for the very reason that it can be bent when necessary without being unbound.‡

In 1212 the Pope granted a further relaxation, that the holy Viaticum could be given to the dying, but commanded that it should be brought to them with great reverence from the conventual churches.§

John had given the Pope some reasons to think at first that he was about to yield; but they were illusions, and it was no care for the distress of his people or their spiritual state that weighed at last with him; much less did he care for his own excommunication which followed. It was only when he saw his people falling away from him, and all other hope of retaining his throne was gone, that, from a motive of policy, he submitted to the Church.

\* *Ib.* ep. 217.

† *Reg. lib.* xii, ep. 9; Migne, tom. ccxvi, p. 19.

‡ *Reg. lib.* xii, ep. 10.

§ *Waverley Annals*, p. 271 (Rolls ed.); *Anglia Sacra*,

i, 480. Matthew Paris and Wendover speak incorrectly, as if Viaticum had been granted from the commencement of the interdict. [There is reason to doubt if the prohibition of Viaticum was strictly observed.]



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In the meantime he envied Mohammedan nations who knew no restrictions of morality and had no Pope to vindicate the rights of God and of God's people. He is said even to have sought help from the Emir of Morocco with an offer of renouncing Christianity. As to the Mass and Sacraments, as he had never cared for them he did not feel their loss.\* He pillaged the churches and confiscated the goods of the churchmen who resisted him. He gave himself up to every kind of brutal self-indulgence, without fear of God or man. It happened that the years of the interdict were prosperous with abundant harvests, and Matthew Paris relates that in 1213, after the interdict had lasted five years, John chanced to see a very fat stag brought in, and he cried out with a laugh! "Oh! he had a good life, and yet he never heard a Mass!" This is but a specimen of his blasphemies, "for at heart he was an infidel," says the historian.

John's character and acts prove that what is called the Reformation, that is to say, the perpetual and self-imposed interdict of the Catholic religion in England, might have come some centuries earlier than it did, had it only depended on the will of kings. Such men as Rufus and John were quite as willing as Henry VIII to sacrifice the souls of their people to the gratification of their own avarice, lust and hate. Remedies such as that made use of by Innocent were possible in the thirteenth century, but would have been found useless in the sixteenth. They depend for their efficacy on the strength of faith, not merely in one country, but throughout Christendom. When a great number have come to be of the opinion of John, that temporal prosperity is more important than religion, and boast how well a country can get on without Mass—like John's fat buck—then it would be an idle threat to deprive them of what they already disregard.

There are different ways in which the privation of our LORD's Presence may be regarded. The devils in the Gospel asked to be let alone, because they knew our LORD to be the Holy One with whom they could have no communion. The masters of the herd of swine asked Him to leave their country because they feared some new losses. In this spirit, malicious wickedness and sordid worldliness are glad to be rid of our LORD's inconvenient or tormenting Presence. In this spirit John regarded the interdict, and modern nations have driven out the Church; but the majority of the people in those days felt very differently. When the Holy Mass was no longer offered and the Blessed Sacrament was removed from the churches, they wept bitterly, like Magdalen, saying: "They have taken away my LORD and I know not where they have laid Him;" or like Mary and Joseph "they sought Him sorrowing." The humiliations of the guilty mingled with the tears of the innocent, until even the hardened were moved to repentance or to fear.

Dr Lingard has spoken with less than his usual thoughtfulness on this subject. He considers it "a singular form of punishment, by which the person of the king was spared, and his subjects, the unoffending parties, were made to suffer." Yet surely a medieval monarch, however despotic, could not be considered apart from his people, as if they bore none of the responsibility of his acts. When it suited their own interests the barons could be bold enough both to counsel and to resist their sovereigns. The feudal system put no standing army in the pay and obedience of the king. It left him dependent on the fidelity of his great vassals. If kings were bold to do evil, it was because they

\* "Magna tribulatio fuit super omnes ecclesias- laici pedem reflectebant, sed victualium plena fuit ticas personas, quia a curâ Christianitatis omnes fere abundantia."—*Annales Wigornenses*, p. 397 (Rolls ed.).

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were pushed on by evil counsellors among the clergy and the laity, were surrounded by docile agents, and counted on the co-operation or connivance of their people. What were the great excommunications and interdicts of the Middle Ages but lessons in constitutional government given to kings and people alike, teaching them that they were responsible to and for each other? If the innocent suffered with the guilty, that is the very condition of human society.

If, however, we seek the truth as it appeared to men of God who saw things as they really were, we are forced to the conclusion that as a nation England at that time was far from innocent. Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died about twenty years before the interdict, had warned both clergy and laity that some great chastisement was impending over them.\* His allusion to the recent death of St Thomas and its causes gives additional interest to his words: "The signs which shall precede the day of judgement are prefigured spiritually in us. It is written that 'the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD shall come' (Joel ii, 31). What the sun and the moon are in the heavens, such are the clergy and the laity in the Church of God. The moon is inferior and receives its light from the sun; so the inferior life of lay people ought to be illuminated by the higher life of those to whom it was said 'You are the light of the world.' But when rulers are ignorant and err, and are blind leaders of the blind, the sun is turned into darkness; and therefore the life of their subjects is turned into blood—the blood of corruption and cruelty. . . . As the laity do not find in us what they ought to imitate, they find what they wish to persecute. The rage of the persecutors lately wounded us in our head, since they persecuted even to death, for his illustrious defence of ecclesiastical liberty, the most blessed martyr of CHRIST, Thomas, our archbishop. And if what fame says, and what the conscience of many fears, is true, it was our disorderly life which was the cause of the evil and which fed so great a hatred. Men did not judge of us as of the ministers of CHRIST and dispensers of the mysteries of God. Whoever thus erred shall indeed bear the judgement of God. We, however, seemed unworthy of the ancient privileges granted by the indulgence of the Roman Pontiffs and our ancient noble kings, for the peace and liberty of the clergy. Yes, let us not fear to confess the truth, we were most certainly unworthy. As regards the merit of our life, we were altogether unworthy; though in every priest, be he what he may, the priestly ministry is holy, and the sacrament of the priesthood honourable.

"Call to mind the days when Doeg the Idumæan slew eighty-five priests wearing the ephod. Remember the old times and the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, shed between the temple and the altar. How many deeds of sacrilegious cruelty have been perpetrated in our own days, though all are as it were summed up in the greatness of that one crime (the murder of St Thomas). But if we still walk in darkness will not the blood of the people be required at our hands? And will not the blessed martyr, who laid down his life for us, lay also his complaint against us? Will not the voice of his blood cry against us from the earth, and we shall be found guilty before the tribunal of the just Judge? He died for our guilt, and through our guilt; for if it was not the cause it was the occasion of his death. If we continue to sin, we may well think that he will not be our patron to justice nor our advocate to pardon, but rather a witness against us and an accuser to vengeance. In the evil we suffer by the just judge-

\* "Tractatus de corruptis moribus cleri et populi," Migne, tom. 204, p. 41.



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ments of God we need blame none but ourselves. We have deserved worse, and do not yet endure according to our merits. To us it is to be imputed, and to our peril it redounds, that the secular power usurps ecclesiastical judgments, and refuses to be guided by ecclesiastical authority; that it neither uses nor relies on the counsels of the Church, but rebels against them; that the sword of Peter is blunted and the keys of Peter are contemned; that the sacraments of the Church are despised; that the holy and terrible name of God is taken in vain in reckless perjury; that due reverence is not paid to consecrated churches, nor due honour given to ecclesiastical persons; and that the honourable name of the religious life is brought into contempt. . . . God, however, is able to free, when He shall please, the spouse whom He loved from the hands of the persecutor."

That there is no exaggeration in these words of Baldwin is unfortunately proved by superabundant evidence. If there were much faith and many virtues in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there was also a general corruption of morals among the clergy and the laity which might well draw down the chastisements of God, but which, nevertheless, men like Archbishop Baldwin rebuked with apostolic boldness and men like Pope Innocent III fought against with apostolic energy. Not love of power and priestly domination, but fear of God to whom he was responsible, determined that great pope to free the Church from the tyranny and consequent corruption to which the sins of men had subjected her.

The crimes of the country attained their climax in John, one of the vilest of our kings; and there was no injustice in requiring the whole nation to unite in expiating his guilt.

Besides this, if we would form a right conception of the great interdict of 1208, we must remember that an interdict is not an ordinary punishment of ordinary crimes. It is a solemn protest against outrages to the liberty and majesty of the Church. She is established by God as the queen of the nations as well as their mother. She has a right to hide her countenance when she is insulted. She had a right to demand reparation. Pope Innocent exercised no tyranny. He withdrew from the English nation nothing to which it had a right. He confiscated none of its riches, he abridged none of its liberties. It was as a supernatural society, as a baptized people, as a part of the Church of which he under CHRIST was supreme ruler, that he humbled the nation, or called upon it to humble itself, by the withdrawal of the brightness of God's Presence. He judged it better that the churches should be closed even for years than that they should be opened for the pompous but sacrilegious ministrations of the enslaved and corrupted priesthood which John would have created. It was better, as he wrote to the Cistercian abbots, that the Holy Spirit should with ineffable groans plead in the hearts of desolate men, than that Masses should be offered in the presence of impenitent sinners.

The obstinacy of the king, and perhaps the sins of the nation, made the interdict far longer than the pope had anticipated. He had hoped that a short vigil would be followed by a glad festival. It was not his fault if the vigil was of unexampled length. It was a war and partook of war's chances. Innocent chose it, it would seem, as a milder measure than excommunication.

Having once entered upon it, he had no choice but to fight it out to victory, even though the victory could not be gained without a far more terrible and prolonged contest than he had expected, and though he was obliged to add at last those other spiritual penalties from which he had shrunk at first.

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The interdict lasted six years and three months; for though the king had been absolved from his excommunication, and High Mass and *Te Deum* were sung in the cathedral of Winchester on July 20, 1213, yet reparation was not made by him, nor the interdict removed from the country, until July 2, 1214.

We may well believe the annalist who says, *Et factum est gaudium magnum in universa Ecclesia Anglicana*.<sup>\*</sup> Picture who can that joy: the joy of the devout priests once more offering the holy Sacrifice; the joy of the monks and nuns raising their voices again in choir and once more assisting at daily Mass; the joy of the men and women feeding their hungry souls on the bread of life; the joy of the youths and maidens witnessing for the first time the sacred rites of which they had so often heard their parents speak, and receiving at length their long-deferred communion; the joy of the holy souls in purgatory that the Precious Blood would plead for them on countless altars; the joy of the saints that their prayers were heard, and the joy of the angels that England had done penance.

## CHAPTER X. THE KEYSTONE

**T**HROUGHOUT this volume I have treated of the Holy Eucharist in its human rather than its divine aspects, of man's reception of the Gift—which is a medley of good and evil—rather than of the Gift in itself, which is all good. To the Holy Eucharist, in which the Incarnation is continued throughout the ages, the words may be applied: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God."<sup>†</sup> History, therefore, must treat of incredulity and ingratitude, no less, or much more, than of faith and love; much more, I say, not only because of the preponderance of evil in itself, but because, as has been said repeatedly, evil has necessarily occupied much more than its due share in all human records. By dint of long and toilsome search into many volumes and out-of-the-way books and documents, much, indeed, that is noble and edifying has been brought together; yet how few the gleanings, how little, compared with the reality that is unrecorded or that has escaped my search! And how much fuller and truer a picture might have been drawn had the scanty relics of this country been supplemented from the memorials of other lands, since Catholic intercommunion was so close that Great Britain was a stranger to no good thing that belonged to the rest of Christendom!

The history of the Holy Eucharist is far from being a history of the whole of Catholic religious life, yet it is the history of its most important phase, since it is that of the Church's central and all-pervading rite. "Throughout the circle of the Church," writes Digby, "all is one beam reflected from this first, giving to every part light and warmth."<sup>‡</sup> We have traced this intimate connexion from the first preaching of the faith in this island to the eve of that Reformation which all who believe in this work of the love of God must look on as the great national catastrophe. We have seen it in all phases of civilization and variety of external circumstances. The Presence took possession of every nook and corner of the land. The faith and worship of the Blessed Sacrament pervaded all classes of society, entered into all public and private life, and

<sup>\*</sup> Thomas Wykes, p. 58 (Rolls Series).

<sup>†</sup> St John i, 10-12.

<sup>‡</sup> *Mores Catholici*, Book viii, cap. 16.



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gave birth to the most varied works and institutions. This is confessed by friends and foes, by believers and unbelievers. "If there was one doctrine," says a recent popular historian, "upon which the supremacy of the medieval Church rested, it was the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It was by his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle which was wrought in the Mass that the lowliest priest was raised high above princes. With the formal denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Wycliffe issued in the spring of 1381 began that great movement of revolt which ended more than a century after in the establishment of religious freedom, by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic Church."\* If the word "anarchy" be substituted in the place of "freedom," there is nothing in this statement that a Catholic cannot accept;† and I propose in this concluding chapter to gather from all that has preceded how truly and how divinely the Holy Eucharist was, and still is, the keystone of the arch erected by JESUS CHRIST to connect earth with heaven.

1. First, then, JESUS CHRIST is Himself that keystone, for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and the Sacrament of the altar is the keystone because It is JESUS CHRIST. This is not a mere dogmatic statement to be accepted only by Catholics and scornfully rejected by others. It must be admitted by every thoughtful student of history, that the belief in our LORD'S sacramental Presence was the great means of making known to each succeeding generation His visible, but transient, Presence in the land of Palestine; and that without this dogma and worship, the memory of the Birth, Life and Death of the Son of GOD on this earth would have faded away, or have been transformed into a fable and a myth. I am not saying that the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to make known the Son of GOD,‡ had no other means, in the resources of His wisdom, to keep alive in the Church the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, even though the Blessed Sacrament had never been instituted, but that as a matter of fact this is the chief of the means that He has employed. Before our REDEEMER'S death, and just after the institution of that Sacrament of which He had said "Do this for a commemoration of Me," He made this promise: "When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me; and you shall give testimony because you are with Me from the beginning."§ If then we look back through the ages to see how this promise has been fulfilled, how this double testimony has been given, we shall find beyond all question that the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church has been the main instrument of both divine and human testimony; it has been the historical evidence of a visible Fact in the world's history; it has been the bond of that supernatural society through which the Holy Ghost ever speaks; and it has been the channel of His communications with each individual soul.

The same Apostle who recorded this promise has described a heavenly vision that was granted to him. He saw and heard heavenly harpers singing: "O LORD, Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to GOD in Thy Blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our GOD a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."|| The Christian religion is therefore not a theosophy or a philosophy; it is a priestly kingdom, based

\* J. R. Green, *History of the English People*, I, 488. Also in his *Short History*, p. 234.

† Mr Green would probably not attach quite the same meaning to the word "supremacy" as a Catholic.

‡ "He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it you."—John xvi, 15.

§ John xv, 26, 27.

|| Apoc. v, 9, 10

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on historic facts, and subsisting in the memory and realization of those facts. "Thou hast redeemed us in Thy Blood" is the heavenly song, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate" is the earthly echo. The Redemption is not merely a heavenly mystery; It has Its place and Its date in the records of earth. It is the main Fact of this world's history. And as a special people and polity were chosen by God to bear witness to the Coming Fact and to prepare for its accomplishment, so has God prepared a special people and polity to bear witness to the Accomplished Fact and to assimilate its results. That people and polity we call the Holy Catholic Church, and because of its mighty functions and the powers with which it is endowed to perform them, it is called by St Paul "the House of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth." By its means the "great mystery of Godliness that was manifested in the flesh" is "preached unto the Gentiles and believed in the world."\* What can be more worthy of our study and admiration than the means by which God has realized what would be impossible to human effort alone—that "every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation," during so many centuries, should be united in the daily and hourly memory, not of a Truth known to their reason or manifested to them by earth and heaven, such as the existence and attributes of God, but of a Life and Death, of words and acts which only one small nation witnessed, and even that nation for the greater part witnessed with indifference? St Peter, who knew how easily the heart may forget and the lips deny even what the eyes have seen and the lips professed, could not refrain from a burst of enthusiastic praise to "the power of God" by which alone faith can be maintained. "Blessed," he exclaims, "be the God and Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST . . . for by His power you are kept by faith unto salvation, at the appearance of JESUS CHRIST whom having not seen you love, in whom also now, though you see Him not, you believe."† For are not ignorance and indifference the state in which most men live with regard to any events which take place far from them, or which have happened long since? How little beyond the mere names do most men know of the world's most famous heroes! How difficult is it to keep up any permanent enthusiasm as to events both well known and of acknowledged importance! Yet intimate knowledge and enthusiastic love of JESUS CHRIST have been attained by thousands and millions of "every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation," and have been ever accessible to all. If He has not been known and loved by all, the ignorant and indifferent will not be able to plead distance of time or remoteness of place from the date and scene of their Redemption, but will be condemned because they loved darkness rather than light. And this accessibility of JESUS CHRIST has been the result of the universality of His Sacramental Presence. This has been God's own Ecce Homo to every tribe and tongue. "Brethren," said St Ælred to his monks one Christmas night, "we have no such great and evident sign of the birth of CHRIST, as that we daily receive His Body and Blood at the holy altar, and that He who was once born for us of a Virgin is daily immolated in our sight."‡

It will not be denied by anyone who has any real acquaintance with the Catholic Church, that the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God are the all-familiar and all-absorbing topics of the thoughts and feelings of her children. An eloquent writer, whose views are in some respects very different from those of Catholics, has most truly said: "The Church never failed to

\* 1 Tim. iii, 15, 16.

† 1 Peter i, 3-8.

‡ Migne, *Patrol*, tom. cxcv, col. 22. Heretics had the same instinct, and drew a correct conclusion. The Gnostics, according to St Ignatius, "abstain from the

Eucharist and the prayer, because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the Flesh of our Saviour, JESUS CHRIST, which suffered for our sins." They denied the Incarnation, and therefore repudiated the Eucharist.



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hold up one sublime Figure towards which all eyes might ever turn for help and strength: it was that of the suffering God upon the cross. The great fact of human nature on which medieval religion was based was its sinfulness, the great consolation was the redeeming efficacy of the death of CHRIST. The central idea of all devotion, therefore, was the Passion. Its force was not impaired by doctrines of predestination and election, which, by emphasizing the immediate connexion between God and the soul, throw into the shade the historic aspects of reconciliation and atonement." The author seems to refer here to Calvinism, but he continues: "On the other hand, as though the death upon the cross had not sufficed, day by day upon ten thousand altars the mystic sacrifice was renewed." The author's meaning is faultless, but he would have more clearly expressed the Catholic belief, had he said that the mystic sacrifice was ever renewed, because the death on the cross was all-sufficing and inexhaustible.

He goes on to say what may perhaps be considered as an objection to the view I am developing: "JESUS had been born, indeed, only to die. The intervening events of His career faded out of sight; and His condescension in entering on our human life and His anguish in quitting it were the two points on which all thoughts and loves were fixed."\* These last words might be taken, contrary no doubt to the intention of their author, as an objection to the Church's method of teaching, as if the Gospel history in its details were purposely kept in the background and nothing offered to the contemplation of men but Divine Mysteries, worked out on earth, indeed, yet too sublime to be daily lessons of instruction. In answer to this it may be admitted that the Holy Eucharist, by its associations and analogies, recalls more directly the Incarnation, Passion and Ascension of the Son of God than His public life, His parables and works of mercy; yet the main difficulty was overcome when the existence of the Man-God was taken out of the region of myths and made a vivid and present reality, when it was withdrawn from the far-off regions of time and space, and brought home and put face to face with each generation and each redeemed soul. Certainly the Church was not wanting either in zeal or in skill to fill up the outlines of the Great Mystery of Godliness for all such as were capable of apprehending them, and neglected no channel of teaching, whether written or oral instruction, festal celebration, painting, sculpture or even stage representation. It would, indeed, almost seem as if the Providence of God had delayed the invention of the art of printing to show how much His Church could do to make JESUS CHRIST known by means of His great commemorative Sacrament, and how little those who have rejected that Sacrament can do for the same purpose with all the multiplied resources that printing has put within their reach. In the Middle Ages, when men's knowledge of ancient history was even ludicrously imperfect and unreal, the Gospel story was both known and understood. In our own day the cultivation of historical criticism has filled men's minds with doubts and perplexities as to the origin and elements of Christianity. The rationalistic explanation of this fact is of course that exact science has dispelled blind credulity. But there is another explanation perfectly satisfactory to the reason, in harmony with the facts of history, and with all our conceptions of the attributes of God—it is that even true historical knowledge of JESUS CHRIST cannot be attained by history alone. The knowledge of God Incarnate is a

\* *The Church of England during the Middle Ages*, by J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., Professor of Eccles. History in Manchester New College, p. 26 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1880).

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deposit committed by the Holy Ghost to His Church, and lost to those who in their pride turn from the living Church and her living sacrament, which GOD has made accessible to all, to the dead records of the past, which are the peculiar possession of the learned few.

2. We have seen, then, that the Holy Eucharist is the keystone or central fact of historical Christianity. It makes known JESUS CHRIST both as GOD and man. But as JESUS CHRIST alone makes known to us His Father and gives us power to worship Him, so it is by means of the Holy Eucharist that the Church ever renders to GOD that adoration in spirit and in truth which He seeks and is willing to accept. Awe and adoration are the special characteristics of Catholic worship. The reason is evident. The very Victim that is offered in adoration is Itself adorable. How, then, can the worshippers in such a sacrifice fail to recognize the infinity of the Divine Attributes?

A learned and thoughtful writer, the late Mr Brewer, in his Introduction to the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Gerald Barry, appears to think that the doctrine of sacrifice held a more prominent position in the minds of men in the earlier than in the later Middle Ages. He writes as follows: "With the schoolmen that followed in the wake of Giraldus the centre" (of theological science) "was the mystery of the Trinity; with him, and before his days, it was sacrifice as set forth in its highest type in the Mass. The distinction is of paramount importance. The two principles affected all forms of doctrine and discipline, of practice and belief, during the two great epochs into which the Middle Ages fall, until they were superseded by the Reformation."\* I have given to this statement the careful attention to which the well-merited reputation of Mr Brewer entitled it, yet I must confess that I can find for it no foundation whatever, either in history or in the nature of theology. The treatise of Giraldus which Mr Brewer was editing does, indeed, deal principally and almost exclusively with the Holy Eucharist; but it not only does not profess to be a complete theology, it disclaims any such pretension, and was written to convey practical instruction on daily duties to country clergymen. When John Myrc, two centuries later, wrote his rhymed treatise for the same purpose, he also confined his lessons mainly to the sacraments. On the other hand, long before Giraldus, St Anselm and others limited their theological instructions to the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation; while Peter Lombard and Cardinal Pullen, contemporaries yet earlier writers than Giraldus, seeking to elucidate the whole circle of Christian doctrine, give no more prominence to sacrifice than any of the later scholastics. Moreover, the distinction made by Mr Brewer, even if it existed in the order of treatment of subjects, could not be of that paramount importance that he attributes to it. For GOD and Sacrifice are correlatives. Sacrifice is offered to none but to GOD, and GOD's greatness demands sacrifice as its only adequate acknowledgement. The Christian sacrifice of the Mass presupposes the doctrine of the Trinity, and cannot be understood without the knowledge of that mystery. According to a very probable interpretation of our LORD's words, the three Divine Persons are alluded to in the great prophecy: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in Spirit and in Truth," i.e., the Holy Spirit shall teach men how, by union with and through Him who is the Word and the Truth, to offer a true, a perfect, an acceptable Sacrifice to the Father. Whatever may be thought of this interpretation—which does not exclude the ordinary one that "spirit and truth"

\* Introd. p. xvi (Rolls Series, 1862).



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are qualities of the worshippers and of the worship—it is most certain that in the later Middle Ages no dimness came over the mind of the Church or of her theologians as to the importance of sacrifice; and later theologians have drawn out with more fullness than the older ones all the marvels of God's power and prodigalities of His grace that meet in the Holy Eucharist as in their centre.

3. The Holy Eucharist is a link between us and the saints in Heaven; for by teaching us practically the incommunicable worship due to God, it has made safe, and easy, and in some sort necessary, our intercourse with saints and angels.

It is probably owing to the loss among Protestants of the worship of sacrifice that they appear generally unable to comprehend the immeasurable distance between the supreme adoration given by the Catholic Church to God and the honours paid by her to God's saints and servants.\* Mr Hallam and others have thought that they had discovered that in practice (though not in theory) the devotion to the saints displaces the worship of God. More careful or less prejudiced observers would not have failed to notice that the very cultus of the saints in the Catholic Church consists practically in a more festive and fervent offering of the sacrifice of the Mass to God only, or in a more pure and humble reception of the Holy Eucharist.

The author whom I quoted a few pages back, in his estimate of the mediæval Church touches admirably on this point. "Above the worshipper," he says, "in circle after circle, rank after rank of holiness, were the innumerable company of the saints. The stories of their lives, read in the public services of the Church, revealed to him the achievements of piety in his own land, amid the fields and houses which he knew; they kept before him a standard of conduct nearer to his capacities than the supreme Figure of the Gospels, but still loftier than his own, and never let his reverence droop, but quickened it constantly by some fresh appeal."† "Only in the rarest moments of supreme communion was the soul left alone with God . . . In seasons of intense devotion these lower forms of the manifestation of righteousness were lost in the excess of light revealed in the unchanging ground of holiness and love from whence they sprang, and the soul and God were left alone. But for the ordinary believer, praying in his accustomed place in his parish church, there rose over the incense-clouds shrouding the priest at the altar, there shone through the gleaming lights of the windows, a mighty company of the unseen, filling the way to heaven, ready to give their suffering for his gain, out of their peace to aid him in his peril. They belonged to all times, they came from all lands, though they spoke but one language, that of thanksgiving, pity, aspiration, trust. Among these he felt a strange familiarity; to their guidance he yielded himself without reserve; their aid he invoked for those most dear to him, and for the sorrowing and helpless everywhere; moreover, with them lay the testimonies of truth, for they had suffered and overcome. What he believed had been learned by them through the sword and the cross; the martyrs had written in their blood the articles of his creed. And so faith and endeavour were not of himself alone, nor of the far-off God beyond all space and time; they were of the Church, which through all ages, among angels, spirits, men, remained the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever."‡

\* I have treated of this subject elsewhere by analysing the nature of saint-worship. See *Our Lady's Dowry*, part II, ch. i, "The Honours paid to our Lady."

† Carpenter, *The Church of England during the Middle Ages*, p. 27.

‡ Carpenter, *The Church of England during the Middle Ages*, p. 14.

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I have gladly quoted this page, which shows an insight into Catholic thought and feeling very rare among Protestants. Professor Carpenter does not confound the not going alone to God with not going to Him directly, or not approaching Him except through a series of mediators. He says most truly that the God of the Catholic Church is not the abstraction of Brahminical contemplation, "a far-off God beyond all space and time." He is indeed far greater and higher above the range of human or angelic thought than Brahmin or Pantheist ever dreamt, yet the Psalmist asks of Him: "Who is as the LORD our God who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and on earth?" He is "the King of ages, immortal and invisible," yet He became mortal and visible; He "dwells in inaccessible light," yet He draws so near to us, that not only has He made our nature His own, but as food becomes one with the body that it nourishes, so does He as the Food of immortality identify Himself with His creatures. The devotion to the saints, instead of being a substitute for communion with a far-off God, is a help to our weakness in the ineffable intercourse we hold with a God so near that our sinful nature shrinks and trembles at such familiarity. Nothing short of experience can teach these truths in their perfect harmony; yet those who possess the insight and sympathy of Professor Carpenter may obtain some glimpse of them if they will reflect on the twofold aspect which Catholic devotion presents, whether it is studied among modern believers or in medieval documents. Sometimes the observer will be tempted to think that the Blessed Virgin and the saints have absorbed the whole of our affections and left nothing for God; and then again he may notice the facts to which every page of this volume bears witness, that the Holy Eucharist, that is (in the faith of Catholics) JESUS CHRIST, God and Man, is the centre and the end of all devotion, the Rite of daily celebration, universal throughout the whole Church, and unvaried throughout all the ages. As Mr Carpenter truly says, "the central idea of all devotion was the Passion," and it was while assisting at Mass and preparing for communion that the worshipper called the saints to his aid. The study of these various phases of devotion will explain how it is that familiarity blends with awe in Catholic worship, and how the daily sacrifice and daily food are still the "tremendous mysteries" before which the seraphim veil their faces.

Thus, then, the Holy Eucharist unites us with our Divine Redeemer JESUS CHRIST, unites us with the ever-blessed Trinity, unites us with saints and angels; and it is ever with a full consciousness of this union that the Church enters on the canon of the Mass, asking in the Preface that her voice may be admitted into the chorus of angels and archangels who sing Holy, Holy, Holy, before the eternal throne.

4. The Holy Eucharist is also the keystone of the Church on earth. By its means especially the Church is Apostolic; for the power of consecrating can only exist as derived by unbroken succession from the Apostles; and a visible and perpetual priesthood both requires and constitutes a visible and perpetual Church, conscious of her powers, and in possession of those truths that such a priesthood presupposes. By the Holy Eucharist this perpetual Church is at all times and in all places One. I do not mean that the apostolical succession of the priesthood suffices by itself, or that it cannot coexist with heresy and schism, though it is a great element of stability wherever it exists, and the schismatical bodies which retain their priesthood and the Holy Eucharist have a living tradition that preserves them from the muta-



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bility characteristic of all Protestant sects. Still the mere presence of our LORD in this gracious mystery does not unite and sanctify and preserve in the truth all who approach it, any more than the visible presence of JESUS CHRIST in Palestine illuminated or sanctified all who saw and heard Him, or than the omnipresence of God prevents the innumerable sins that daily outrage it. The presence and action of the Holy Spirit are necessary to the mystic Body of CHRIST, that is, the Holy Church, as well as the presence of His real and Sacramental Body. But how can the Holy Ghost more effectually promote unity both external and internal, and inspire horror of schism, than by enlivening faith in the presence of the Church's Head, one and the same in all times and places? The Holy Eucharist is the heritage of all. If the priest consecrates, the layman partakes. No difference of dignity or learning makes one priest's consecration better than another's; no inequality of rank among the laity adds to, or takes from, the greatness of the Gift. The Hermit of Farne called down on the rude altar in his thatched oratory as great a Guest, because the same, as the Archbishop of Canterbury in his metropolitan church; the bondman was as privileged as the king. Whether St Wilfrid celebrated among the Picts of North Britain, the Angles of Northumbria, the Franks of Gaul, or in the presence of men of every nation whom he met in Rome, he found everywhere the same faith, and could say to all: "The bread that we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the LORD? For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of One Bread." This unity of the Catholic Church among so many tongues and tribes has no parallel elsewhere in human religions or philosophies, and is the special mark by which our LORD wished His disciples to be recognized. Mr Green, in the passage that I have quoted, seems to exult in the severance of the Teutonic nations from the Catholic Church as the means by which Wycliffe had achieved "religious freedom." But the Son of God made permanence and unity the conditions of freedom. "If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "Not for them only (the Apostles) do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe in Me: that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."\* Who does not know that if doubts at the present day are disturbing men's minds as to the Divine Mission of JESUS CHRIST, it is principally owing to that great severance and subsequent religious anarchy of so many nations once united? Yet the spectacle of the Church's unity is no less striking and instructive than of old, and is indeed greatly enhanced by the endless and hopeless divisions of the sects. The Catholic of to-day, as he kneels before the altar, says with a feeling of gratitude, greater than could have been known in the Middle Ages: "Thou hast hidden me in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues."†

It is the fashion, but an ignorant and thoughtless fashion, to treat this great fact of unity as the result of unreasoning acquiescence in whatever dogmas are promulgated by authority, and consequently as a proof of mental sloth. Though I have touched on this matter in the opening chapter of this volume, I will add here that the spectacle of the unity of Catholic belief in the twelfth century suggested a very different conclusion to those who were familiar with the restlessness of speculation which was then agitating the nations, so that Baldwin, a Cistercian monk (afterwards Archbishop of Canter-

\* John viii, 31, 32; xvii, 20, 21.

† Ps. xxx, 21.

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bury), saw in it a marvel of God's grace. "Two things are very marvellous in this Sacrament," he wrote: "one is, that such things should be done by God; the other is, that they should be believed by man. Those who do not believe that they are done by God wonder that they should be believed. But in truth God is the Author both of the thing that is believed and of the faith that believes, *and God is equally wonderful in both.*"\*

5. The Holy Eucharist was also the keystone of the social fabric, and created a profound unity in a society in which many natural causes were at work to cause division and to sever race from race and class from class. It spoke to all in the same accents, which all understood in the same way. It bade all assist at the common Sacrifice. It invited all to partake of the same Communion Feast. It awoke the same chords in the hearts of all, touching their most tender, their most sacredly cherished feelings and affections, so that on these the hearts of all could beat in unison. It was the Blessed Eucharist that presided in the family circle at the various epochs of the life of each, whether of joy or sorrow. It sanctified childhood at the first communion. It blessed the marriage bond in the nuptial Mass. It strengthened the mother before the agonies of child-birth, and sanctified her joy when her pains were over.† It comforted the dying with the Holy Viaticum. It consoled and gave hope at the Requiem to the mourner in his bereavement. It marked rest from labour to the toiling. It gave the note of joy and gladness to the festival and the holiday, and it sweetly chastened the season for penance. All looked upon the Holy Mass as the great fountain of benediction from whence they might seek a supply for all their needs, not only spiritual, but also temporal, for themselves and those dear to them.

This brings me to the reflection that the Eucharistic faith and practice were not imposed upon an unwilling people from above by the clergy, by princes and governments, as in Protestant times have been the denial and repudiation of Catholic doctrine and the reception of the bread and wine by Test and Corporation laws, by fines, imprisonment and exile. If, in the course of the fifteenth century, a few Lollards were compelled to abjure their heresy, or were punished at the stake for bringing in division where all had been unity, these were but the rarest exceptions to the general feeling of the country through so many ages. The Catholic faith and practice had been heartily adopted, embraced and entered into by the laity, who not only zealously promoted it, but even showed themselves not unfrequently foremost in their zeal. We have seen their generosity in building churches, erecting altars, furnishing ornaments, sacred vessels and vestments, in their guilds, in maintaining chaplains, founding Masses, organizing processions.‡ It was from the people, moreover, that the clergy themselves and the religious Orders were recruited with priests, brothers, hermits, nuns. Thus then, in spite of the influence of Wycliffe and the Lollards, in spite of the influence of Cranmer and Latimer and so many more in spreading Lutheran, Calvinistic and Zwing-

\* *Treatise on the Holy Communion*, Migne, tom. cccv, col. 655. I regret that I could not quote more largely from this beautiful treatise. It would well repay translation.

† These were two epochs at which the reception of Holy Communion was especially urged. But the synod of Durham (A.D. 1220) prudently added: "When women come to be churched after child-birth, priests must only give them blessed bread and not the Body of Christ, unless they expressly ask for it, and have made their confession." (Wilkins, i, 580.)

‡ The *Burgh Register of Aberdeen* contains many curious proofs of the interest taken by the laity in all matters of religion. The town council was in the habit of imposing penances on faulty citizens. The following is a specimen: "William Matthewson, for injury done by him to John Galt, shall uphold the lady Mass with voice on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, each week for a year, and which of them two trespass first on the other in time to come shall pay to the Kirk-work 10l." This was in 1444. *Burgh Register*, i, 12 (Spalding Club).



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lian heresies, the Catholic faith and devotion had taken such deep root in the mass of the nation, that the acknowledgement is becoming more and more frequent, on the part of those who have studied the history of the sixteenth century, that the Reformation was forced on an unwilling people.\*

6. On account of this unitive power of the Blessed Sacrament manifested in so many ways, some of our old English writers understood not inaptly by "sanctorum communionem" in the Apostles' Creed, not merely the communion of saints, but the communion of holy things by which saints are made, and especially that sacrament which is called pre-eminently the sacrament of Holy Communion. Thus, in *The Chester Plays*, St Matthew is introduced promulgating the article in the Creed: "Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam, sanctorum communionem," and says:

And I beleeve, thurgh Godes grace,  
Such beleefe as holly church has,  
That Godes bodye graunted us was  
To use in forme of Bredde.†

The paraphrase of the Creed in *The Lay Folk's Mass Book* has:

Wel I trow in tho holi gost,  
And holi kirc that is so gode;  
And so I trow that housel es  
Bothe flesshe and blode.‡

John Myrc thus translates or interprets:

In the holy gost I leve welle,  
In holy chyrche and hyre spelle,  
In goddes body I be-leve nowe  
Amonge hys seyntes to geve me rowe.§

Sacramental Communion is not, indeed, equivalent to the Communion of Saints, yet it is one great part of it, and it is the principal means of effecting it. Wycliffe used to object that faith in Transubstantiation is not contained in any creed. Waldensis replied: "Let the enemy of the Sacred Host learn that faith in all its mysteries is contained in that article of the Apostles' Creed: 'I believe in the Communion of Saints.' For if the principal communion of Christians consists in the communication of the sacraments, how can that one be wanting to their number which is the highest communion among all communions? As well might Peter be absent when CHRIST speaks to His twelve Apostles." Waldensis quotes in support of this view the commentary of Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, on the "Heavenly Hierarchy" attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. Dionysius had said that the Eucharist was called Communion in a singular sense. Grosseteste writes: "Every other sacrament receives its power of uniting us in communion with God from this Sacrament which is primarily and principally unitive. For in this Sacrament is the true Flesh of our SAVIOUR which He took from the Virgin, and in which He suffered to redeem us; not separated from His soul nor from His Divinity, but inseparably united. And

\* Should I ever complete these studies, I shall have abundant proofs to give of the assertion in the text. I will be satisfied here with one quotation from an Anglican clergyman of great historical learning and accuracy: "The establishment of the Mass in Queen Mary's reign," writes Dr Jessopp, "had caused immense joy throughout the land. . . . The Mass was felt to be, and known to be, the one great and precious mystery which every devout Catholic clung to with unspeakable awe and fervour, and to rob him of that was to rob him of the one thing on which his religious life

depended; that gone, it was imagined all else would go with it." (*One Generation of a Norfolk House*, p. 64.)

† *Chester Plays*, "The Emission of the Holy Ghost," vol. II, pp. 135, 136.

‡ *Lay Folk's Mass Book* (E. E. T. Soc.), p. 20. Canon Simmons remarks, p. 228, that while it is rare to find "sanctorum communionem" understood as communion in holy things, yet "the seven sacraments are often specified under this head as being the inheritance of the saints."

§ *Instructions*, etc. (E. E. T. Soc.), p. 14.

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so in this Sacrament is the Son of GOD, perfect GOD and perfect Man, who taking our humanity united us to Himself, and made us communicate in one nature with Himself; and then giving back to us His Flesh thus pre-eminently dignified to eat, He gathers us together and unites us with His own Person, that we may be all one in CHRIST, perfect in His perfection.”\*

This being so, all Christian sanctity is an emanation from the Blessed Sacrament, directly or indirectly, and is therefore a testimony to Its truth. When the heathen brothers Tiburtius and Valerianus heard the noble words, and saw the noble mien, and considered the noble conduct of St Cæcilia, they exclaimed: “Of a truth, this CHRIST of hers must be the true GOD, since He has chosen such a handmaid.” In the same way, when we read in Christian history the record of holy words and deeds, we must exclaim: “Truly is the Sacrament of the altar nothing less than what the Holy Church proclaims, since It has had such worshippers and has borne such fruits.”

Let this be one result of our review. Yet on the other hand let us guard against measuring the greatness or the holiness of this Sacrament by the treatment It meets from evil men or by the imperfect correspondence of even the best men. As to the indifference or mockery of the modern infidel or heretical world, he only will be moved by it who is shaken in his faith in JESUS CHRIST because Pilate muttered “What is truth?” or who has never understood why our LORD kept silence before Herod and allowed that trifler to treat Him as a fool. GOD derives not His greatness from man’s homage, nor is He a loser though the whole miserable world forsake Him. Impiety and outrage and neglect should only make us redouble our acts of faith and love.

But, though we should not measure GOD’s greatness by the homage paid to Him by His saints, we should glorify His power and mercy in inspiring it and His condescension in receiving it. It was when contemplating this ineffable mystery of the Holy Eucharist in the words and lives of Catholic saints, that the late Kenelm Henry Digby, the father in England of all real study of the Middle Ages, broke out into the exclamation: “O holy Church, Catholic and Roman, if all that hitherto is told of thee were in one praise concluded, it were too weak to furnish out this turn. The human race had preserved the remembrance of an original society between GOD and man, and the same tradition had perpetuated the hope that more intimate communications would be re-established by the Redeemer, universally expected. . . . So through the long lapse of ages which faith illuminated, there is heard from the race of men an uninterrupted voice of praise, and literally witnessed a sleepless act of adoration. For behold GOD, the Saint of saints, the Creator of men, and the LORD of angels, is present on the altar. Those who are in chosen fellowship advanced to the great supper of the Blessed Lamb, whereon who feeds hath every wish fulfilled, can say with truth that JESUS, the most sweet, most benign JESUS, is in the midst of them; they see Him—blessed are they. They see GOD. ‘O invisible Creator of the world, how wondrously dost Thou act with us!’ exclaims one of that happy number; ‘how sweetly and graciously dost Thou dispose things with Thy elect, in offering them in the sacrament Thyself!’

“But alas! the blindness of man! Why does not every heart commingle with the flame that shrouds that glory? *Tibi hoc incredibile, quia beatissimum?* Why should not the Saviour’s promise be fulfilled? Why should not the clean of heart be comforted? Yes, when we recall to mind those ancient holy men, many of them the wonder of their age for wisdom, the glory of their age for earthly

\* Waldensis, *De Euch.* II, 557.



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grandeur, who evinced seraphic love for this divine mystery; when we recollect the number of profound angelic intelligences which recognized in it the source of all their light, of all their virtue; when with the eyes of mind we behold them bowed unto the earth in presence of the Eucharist, or with looks directed toward the hallowed steps, so full of joy, as if they saw descending from them every light in heaven, the natural impulse is to exclaim with the ascetic, ‘*O vera ardens fides eorum, probabile existens argumentum sacræ præsentie tuæ!*’ ”\*

\* *Mores Catholici*, book VIII, ch. 16. May I say *Requiescat in Pace* of my venerable friend, who has passed away from us while these last chapters were being written? And may he enjoy His Presence in heaven whom he adored and loved on earth! My own imperfect studies in the Middle Ages were prompted by a desire to supplement in some small

degree the writings of Mr Digby, who, among his innumerable quotations and illustrations of medieval piety, has very little about England. Many indeed of the books I have quoted were unpublished when he wrote. When last I saw him he spoke of the pleasure with which he should read this book.





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*An Annotated Translation*

*with some Abridgements*

*of the*

SVMMA CONTRA GENTILES

*of*

S<sup>T</sup> THOMAS AQUINAS

*by*

JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

M.A. Lond: B.Sc. Oxon: (Author of "Aquinas Ethicus," etc., etc.)

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